

# THE MESSAGE OF ASIA

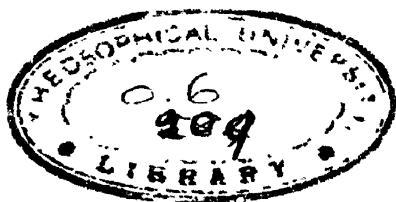
*by*

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DUCKWORTH

3 Henrietta Street, London

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## FOREWORD

AFTER giving, in *Time Stood Still*, an unsparing account of the horrors and miseries of internment, Cohen-Portheim could nevertheless add that for him it had been an experience of the greatest value. So far, indeed, from being a mere interval, of more or less acute misery but in any case completely barren, as they were to most of his fellow prisoners, these years may be called the central period of his life—incidentally, the only one of which he felt impelled to write a full autobiographical account—a sort of chrysalis-stage from which an entirely new creature emerged. In his case the transformation was, externally speaking, from painter to writer. The chief interest of the old Cohen-Portheim had been in art, his *milieu* the “high Bohemia” (a term much used, if not positively coined, by him) of Paris, which he has described in the third section of the last book he wrote, *The Discovery of Europe*: the new Cohen-Portheim who emerged from internment is exhibited most perfectly in the book here translated, *Asien als Erzieher*. The first draft was actually written at Wakefield camp, in circumstances which he has himself described. Forced in upon himself by the conditions of life, instead of going mad he built up for himself, with the aid of books but still more by meditation, a consistent philosophy, by which he henceforth lived. This philosophy was based on what is sometimes loosely referred to as the “wisdom of the East”. He has recorded that it was certain spiritualistic experiments carried out with some friends in camp that actually caused him to turn in this direction, but in any case it needs no

explanation that a man with unlimited leisure to read and think at such a time should turn in disgust from the West and all its works, and that one thus forced in upon himself should turn to a philosophy which is based on "inwardness".

He could not, of course, remain in the rather exalted mood of *The Message of Asia* for ever; and to most people the gently disillusioned, infinitely observant, intelligent and tolerant cosmopolitan Cohen-Portheim of later years may seem, after all, to have more in common with his pre-war self than with the almost mystic of Wakefield camp. But the latter did not die, even though he may have retreated somewhat into the background as normal life of a kind resumed its course. True, Cohen-Portheim changed some of his opinions in the after-war years (his ability to do this was one of his great intellectual merits), he became less hopeful about the early triumph of the spirit of Universalism, and turned his attention more and more away from the idea of going to school with the philosophers of Asia and towards that of saving a specifically European civilisation. Yet he could claim that *The Message of Asia* was nevertheless "the basis of all I have written since". Even in casual conversation he would suddenly say something which completely transcended the intelligent observer he normally appeared, and most readers of his books on England and France must have been surprised every now and then by the high and even passionate idealism which flashes out from behind the sustained common sense—sustained to an extent that in itself almost amounts to genius. That idealism was invariably centred on the same point—namely, the supremacy of the spiritual over the material, or, as he expresses it in this book, the conviction that the physical world, whether it be the scientific world of atoms and electrons or the ordinary world of imperialism, big business



## FOREWORD

and big battalions, is *māya*, appearance, illusion; that it is the spirit which is the only ultimate reality.

Though not quite his first effort at writing, *The Message of Asia* was the first book of his to appear in print, being published in German in 1920. It immediately established his reputation and led to a busy career of journalism and authorship. Events may seem to have falsified many of his predictions, especially in the political sphere—well might he say in 1931, in *Time Stood Still*, that he was afraid he had grown less optimistic; yet I do not think that he would have wished to withdraw much of what he said in 1920, though he might have expressed himself more cautiously. Time, he would have said, was on his side. Matter might cause longer delays, greater set-backs than he had reckoned with, but the Spirit would triumph in the end. The most remarkable thing about *The Message of Asia* is its quiet sanity, its complete absence of fanaticism, so remarkable in a convert—but perhaps “convert” is too strong a word, for it was another of his great intellectual virtues that he never supposed any view, least of all his own, to hold a monopoly of truth. Seldom can the anti-materialist, anti-rationalist cause have been advocated with so much sweet reasonableness as here. The ordinary rationalistic Western mind is apt to be merely irritated by the “wisdom of the East”, and it cannot be said that the champions of the latter generally go out of their way to allay that irritation. Cohen-Portheim’s great feat is to have presented the Eastern point of view in such a manner that not even the most hardened Westerner, if his mind is in the least degree open, can refuse to listen.

ALAN HARRIS



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## PREFACE

AUTUMN 1918

THIS book originated in a prison-camp during the years I spent there behind barbed wire.

Not only were the prisoners separated from the outside world by the barbed wire, but the camp was further subdivided by it into different parts, and this artificial barrier was sufficient to give rise to an antagonism, a mutual dislike, between the separate camps which steadily increased with the years.

Had the other necessary conditions been present, I have no doubt that different languages, religions, races and, finally, hostile nations would have grown up in due course.

This artificial, barbed-wire barrier came to symbolise for me everything that divides the human race. Artificial divisions produce antagonisms, which in their turn engender distrust, aversion and hatred.

In the last analysis hatred is nothing but lack of understanding or misunderstanding.

This book has grown up out of a desire to get to the bottom of these misunderstandings and so help to eliminate them.

Hatred springs from a misunderstanding of one's own and other people's natures, from a failure to recognise the kinship between them and the fundamental unity which underlies them.

In the recognition of this unity lie the means of overcoming hatred.

Universalism is the effort to reach this unity; the force opposed to it is individualism.

Asia has always been, and still is, imbued with the truth of universalism (I am here thinking chiefly of the sacred writings of India and the great sages of China, as well as of their art, and am using "Asia" as a spiritual not a geographical term). Europe, especially since the Renaissance, has developed on more and more strongly individualist lines. It has valued the individual, the dividing force, above the universal, what is common to the whole world. Europe exalts reason above feeling and prefers the often deceptive conclusions of this reason to intuitive wisdom.

Naturalism in philosophy, utilitarianism in ethics, the struggle between nations, classes and individuals —these are the outcome of the last few centuries of European development. The world war was its culmination, but also its end.

A new intellectual orientation and the new discoveries and researches of science have paved the way for a great change in the European ideal, a change which is now in progress and is bringing it back nearer to the timeless wisdom of the East. The temporary estrangement between the two main divisions of the human race (for in this sense America belongs to Europe) is approaching its end.

Behind the disputes of the day lies the real problem of our times, which is the issue of Asia *versus* Europe and the synthesis of the two.

The spirit of Asia is our teacher and guide along the path which leads to this goal and on which the human race has already set foot, though the crowd, which never looks beyond the moment, does not realise the fact.

This book is intended as a contribution to the settlement of problems and controversies of various kinds: it

## P R E F A C E

seeks to get rid of antagonisms and antitheses. Its unity lies not so much in the linking together of these problems, which is conditioned by personal interest and knowledge, as in the maintenance of a single point of view in questions of all sorts, a point of view from which not only these but all antitheses might, in my opinion, be cleared up.





## INTRODUCTION

*THE GROWTH OF ANTITHESES*



## INTRODUCTION

### *THE GROWTH OF ANTITHESES*

THAT the sensible world is mere appearance, *māya*, is the fundamental notion that is repeated over and over again in countless Indian metaphysical writings. Appearance is deceptive, but behind it, obscured as if by a veil, lies truth. This means, in modern terminology, that all things in the world of sense are relative and interdependent; and that the absolute truth (the "thing in itself") remains hidden from us.

This truth remains hidden from us, according to the wisdom of the Indians, because the sensible world is dominated by "antitheses". That is to say, India regarded the antithetical method as the cause of error.

How should we interpret that?

In the following manner, if I am not mistaken: —

Our knowledge is defective because our thinking is all based on disjunction, on the creation of contrasts. We have to separate an object from its surroundings, contrast it with them, before we can grasp it at all. Thus we begin by separating the self from the world outside it. The infant knows nothing of this distinction, its life is purely emotional, but the moment it recognises a person or thing (not yet itself) as something distinct and clearly defined, we know that it has begun to think.

Thus our whole knowledge of the world is based on disjunction, on the principle of differentiation which our reason imports into it. It is, however, only through this

fferentiation, this creation of individualities, that Man becomes conscious of his own individuality.

Individualism is the dividing, the exclusive principle in the world, and is based on our reason, on intellect.

If the human spirit consisted entirely of reason, then for each individual everybody else, and indeed the whole external world, would be opposed to his own ego. Wholehogging individualism does in fact lead to this view and through it to the doctrine of the struggle of all against all.

Actually, the human spirit is compounded of reason and feeling. Feeling is the unifying, the inclusive principle in the world, and leads, in the end, to universalism.

Individual entities gradually emerged from the original undifferentiated whole: minerals, vegetables, the animal kingdom, the human race are the names given to the (artificially separated) stages on the way. The desire to preserve and enhance one's individuality we call the instinct of self-preservation (Schopenhauer's "will to live"). It is, as far as we can see, the mainspring of all life, and at the same time the creator of *māya*.

It is necessary to grasp the idea of evolution, comparatively new to Europe but familiar to India from time immemorial, if one is to reconcile these two things.

Evolution implies that there is nothing static, that everything is developing and that all forms of life are transitional forms. Individualism, the instinct of self-preservation is not a fixed and immutable "characteristic". To be sure, no life is conceivable without it, but not even the lowest animals live exclusively by it. Evolution is always sublimating this simple instinct, tending to transform it into universalism. In the beginning is the undifferentiated whole, then comes differentiation, and at the end of all things these individualities, having reached their highest pitch of development, will once more form a single whole.

This unity cannot be grasped by the reason, because it is above the reason. Feeling has an inkling of it, mysticism and art, too, are aware of it; the Buddhists call it *nirvāṇa*, the annihilation of *māya*. This final goal cannot be described in words, because language is a rational creation, but the tendency, the way that leads to the goal, is intelligible enough.

A second instinct, the sexual instinct, already manifests itself at quite a low stage of evolution. (It is not, of course, a second instinct at all; it and all the thousand other instincts into which reason divides up the whole are sublimations of one and the same vital instinct, stages in the process of sublimating individualism into universalism.)

"Sexual instinct" is a name for one manifestation—the instinct of nutrition is prior to it—of the desire of the self for union with the not-self, it is the source of everything that we call love or that is based on love—parental affection (among animals too), philanthropy, friendship, sympathy, and all art is based on it. Every now and again this is announced as a new discovery and vehemently disputed.

The transformation of individualism into universalism is thus going on, infinitely slowly, all the time.

This transformation does not proceed without a struggle; indeed it is based on the struggle between the two tendencies within the human spirit, in which reason, being primarily concerned with the preservation of the individual, is always trying to frustrate the sacrifice of the individual which evolution demands.

Reason remains on the side of "egoism" till it grasps the truth that the apparent sacrifice is really an enrichment of individuality.

Love and selfishness, the inclusive and the exclusive principles, war against each other, but the struggle invariably ends by the beloved object's being recognised as part

of the self—thus the mother's egoism includes her children. Each individual, each ego is constantly growing, as a result of everything that it incorporates, absorbs, includes within itself.

Feeling repudiates the dividing principle of individuality. In its most intense form, ecstasy, it seeks complete release, the merging of its identity in the All. But that is incompatible with what we call life—hence the close relation between ecstasy and the desire for death.

That is why every living creature is imprisoned in *māya* and can only find release in *nirvāṇa*.

First comes a confused sense of unity; then the consciousness of individuality gradually emerges from it, developing along with reason but always accompanied by a longing for reunion. This longing stands at once above and below reason, it is both a retrospective instinct and a prophetic intuition. If one bears in mind that every individual grows in the course of development by incorporating the whole external world in himself, then the notion of eventual union can also be grasped by the intellect.<sup>1</sup>

Thus we live in a word of illusion, because we believe in an absolute antithesis of the individual and the universe.

A further obstacle to knowledge, as Bergson has shown in such an illuminating manner, is that our intellects can only grasp rest, not motion.

Our thinking is based on comparisons, so we create for ourselves artificial contrasts, discrete objects, which we can only conceive as eternally fixed and static.

Thus we distinguish youth and age, heat and cold, light and darkness, even life and death, although we know that

<sup>1</sup> There is also another way in which it can be grasped. Even natural science, that purely intellectual creation, has recognised that the absolutely isolated individual is *māya*. Recent physical theories have, in fact, left us with nothing but a "bloodless ballet" of ever-changing, and therefore interchangeable, atoms in an all-pervading ether, they have branded the dismembered, discrete world of our senses as an illusion.

they are not absolute opposites at all, but concepts that gradually shade off into each other and are only artificially fixed.

These are the "antitheses" which are the starting-point of Indian teaching. The distinction between them is merely a matter of appearance—this applies even to the distinction between cause and effect, according to the Indian view—but language has no word for the unity behind them both.<sup>1</sup>

The second artificial antithesis created by our thinking is, then, based on our static manner of looking at things, and finds expression in our language.

These two fundamental errors—the idea that objects or concepts are discrete and the idea that they are fixed and therefore immutable—thus falsify every judgment of the reason.

Awareness of unity, on which art depends for its effect, is reserved for feeling; reason cannot get on without the division into definite, discrete, fixed concepts. They alone make communication by the spoken or written word possible, and language seeks to achieve a maximum of accuracy by having the largest possible number of the most precise terms. But the most precise concept imaginable finds expression in a catchword and so gets labelled as something absolute, one catchword is set up against another, and so these (apparently) absolute opposites, these intellectual antitheses, are created. The reason why almost all attempts to reach clarity in any dispute are so hopeless is that each of the disputants sets up his own

<sup>1</sup> In this connection great interest attaches to the latest researches into the original Egyptian language, from which it appears that this language had only a single word for such pairs of opposites, e.g., big-small, man-woman, distinguishing marks being added later, before distinct words were evolved. This shows how the sense of unity was only differentiated much later by thought. Incidentally, the inner meaning of the legend of the Fall, the apple of knowledge and the expulsion from Paradise may well lie in a symbolic representation of the development of reason.

view and his own catchword in absolute opposition to those of his opponent, instead of trying to recognise the relativity of the opposition and realising that two things or ideas can only be compared at all in virtue of the higher unity on which they rest. The only way to reach agreement on anything or to come to terms with an opposing point of view is by looking for this unifying principle, learning to regard contrasts as deviations from an ideal middle point, and remembering that without unity there could be no opposites, because one can only measure two things by reference to a third one, which is the unity behind them.<sup>1</sup>

The further two opponents get from this invisible centre, the more absolutely opposed they inevitably seem; but the moment they look for the higher unity, this opposition loses its meaning. For example, if we consider the people of Berlin and of Munich as opposites, we may easily end by regarding them as two entirely different sorts of being, who can never see eye to eye; but if we consider them both as Germans—which is the higher unity in this case—and contrast them with the Chinese, say, the similarities will suddenly appear very great, the differences very small, and there will be no difficulty about seeing eye to eye. Again, the difference between Chinese and Germans disappears when one considers them both as human beings and compares them with other mammals; and so on.

The usual, mistaken sort of discussion accentuates differences, the other sort makes them disappear.

<sup>1</sup> A further difficulty is caused by the fact that the reasons advanced in support of an opinion are seldom the true ones. These last are mostly unconscious. Reason only comes along afterwards and invents "reasonable" grounds for what feeling demands. Hate easily finds an intellectual justification for itself, in which it then proceeds to believe—as everyone must have learnt in the past few years! Just so the lover tries to prove that his love is reasonable—and in doing so discovers the most improbable motives for it. Ultimately, therefore, what opponents go for in each other is the least essential part.



Value-judgments, on the other hand, may nevertheless remain irreconcilable, because they are based on feeling and therefore do not admit of discussion at all. I cannot prove that black men are better than white or *vice versa*; but I can insist that both are, before all things, men.

It is the unifying principle that gives sense and proportion to the antithesis; finding the highest possible unity means taking one's stand on the highest possible ground.

In my opinion, the most fundamental antithesis is that between the individual and the universal aim.<sup>1</sup>

I have tried to show that even this chasm is unbridgeable only for reason, not for feeling, that, on the contrary, feeling has steadily narrowed it in the course of evolution. As I regard both tendencies as fundamentally one thing and believe that they reciprocally condition and help one another, it follows that I am bound to regard both as "right".

Since, however, I look upon the world as growing and moving, I may consider one tendency or the other as desirable in a given case and at a given moment; I am then making a value-judgment.

I have begun with these reflections by way of introduction in order to make my point of view clear, which it could not be without them; if I constantly revert to them, that will not be because I suspect the reader of a bad memory but rather because I am very well aware that I shall, against my will, constantly lose sight of it myself, and therefore need to recall it to mind. I have to remind myself again and again that every contradiction must necessarily be based on the fact that we see plurality in the place of unity and rest where there is motion.

<sup>1</sup> The ultimate intelligible fundamental law of the universe seems to me to be that of attraction and repulsion. On the alternation of these life depends. Why this is so, we do not know. Love and hate, universalism and individualism, are only manifestations of this fundamental law.

It is not my intention to repeat this over and over again like a pedant, but I mean it to remain my fundamental theme. Before one can start a discussion with anybody, one must have reached an agreement on fundamentals. I can, for instance, quite imagine somebody denying evolution altogether or maintaining that it is a cyclic, not a progressive, movement. These ultimate things are a matter of faith and do not admit of intellectual proof, for which reason all discussion is waste of time without preliminary agreement, one can only agree to differ. I have thought it better to make my fundamental philosophy, my conception of life, perfectly clear to the reader from the very beginning, than to leave him to pick it up as he goes along, so that, if it does not please him, he can leave the book unread.

I also hope in this way to avoid what I regard as a writer's worst fault—lack of clearness about his outlook or the complete absence of any outlook of his own and the substitution of a partisan approach.

We cannot all be great minds, but I consider it as every writer's first duty to try to think clearly and honestly. When all is said and done, the great thing is not to say something new—there is nothing new—but to approach questions with a minimum of prejudice and to induce the reader, as far as possible, to do the same.

The value of any piece of intellectual work lies not so much in the things it contains as in the things it is capable of calling forth in other people. Only in this sense are there immortal works.

PART I

*ANTITHESES IN THE LIFE OF NATIONS*



## 1.—NATIONALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

Words are symbols which enable people to exchange ideas. They are conventional, i.e., agreed, terms for objects or concepts, of which each individual nevertheless retains his own notion.

This is particularly true when it comes to purely theoretical concepts such as nationalism and internationalism, for instance. It is, therefore, necessary to state precisely what one means by these terms before one can discuss them.

Development is made possible by the struggle and reconciliation of individualism and universalism. To strike the balance between these two is the business of each individual and also of the collective group. The further development proceeds, the more is individualism compelled to recognise universalism as "reasonable". Anything that is still, at any given moment, above the level attained by reason is classed as "Utopian", while the stage just reached is treated as axiomatic. The latter is said to be "natural" to mankind, the former contrary to human nature. Thus an artificial antithesis is set up, which leads in due course to the belief that the two tendencies are contradictory and mutually exclusive, and that one must be right, the other wrong. In this way the individualist comes to deny the right of anything to exist that might hinder the development of the self, while the universalist retorts by declaring individuality to be the root of all evil.

Individualism is the necessary preliminary to universalism, but the latter cannot achieve victory by

suppression. The more highly individualism is developed the more it passes over into universalism, till the contrast finally disappears.

In national life individualism and universalism are known as nationalism and internationalism—supernationalism would be the better name, but I have avoided it because it easily leads to misunderstanding.

Both denote an effort to reach human unity. The only difference is that nationalism regards the nation as the highest unity, whereas internationalism subordinates the nation as a unit to a higher unity, that of all nations. The trend of human evolution is towards the combination of individuals in larger and larger wholes.<sup>1</sup> Starting from the cave as unit it advances to the tribe and thence *via* the municipality to the state. States grow and grow till we finally reach the great nations of modern times. But at any given moment the degree of unity reached is regarded as final anything beyond or above it people regard with suspicion and, too often, with hostility, instead of realising that the greater includes the less without being antagonistic to it.

To love one's country as a whole, there is no need to suppress one's love for one's own province, nor is the latter inconsistent with love of one's native place, one's own family and finally one's own self : it is only necessary that the narrower interest should voluntarily subordinate itself to the wider. But unregenerate human nature wants it the other way round, and its egoism has to be compelled by evolution, operating through the struggle for existence, to combine. Once the unit is established, conflict ceases within its limits, the interests of the community being recognised as stronger than the private interests of the individual.

<sup>1</sup> Other kinds of unit than the political exist, of course, e.g., professional and religious ones. But we must confine ourselves here to this single aspect of the matter.

All progress depends on this victory over individual egoism, on the recognition of the fact that individualism and the interests of the community are not opposed to each other but identical. The human race is perpetually striving to find a new ground in reason for this instinctive craving for unity. That is the real meaning of all religious dogmas, all social and political ideals. They are means of subordinating the interests of the individual to those of the community, of creating the higher unity and finally bringing about the unity of the whole human race.

But as soon as some such provisional unity is reached, it immediately becomes its ambition to develop its collective individuality to the highest possible point, and hence it comes into conflict with other collective individualities.

Only a very short period of evolution is known to us historically, and our history shows us this struggle between national units, varied by attempts to bring about international unity.

This last was the idea of Rome, whose mantle fell on the Church; it inspired the Holy Roman Empire and the imperial dreams of Napoleon, but it always came to grief because it insisted on trying to achieve by force what can only come through voluntary co-operation. Suppressed individualism invariably took its revenge and produced a reaction from the greater to the smaller.

What we now call nationalism in the narrower sense is the reaction which followed in Europe on the attempt of Napoleon to bring about the unity of all mankind, as preached by the French Revolution, forcibly.

The newly-roused self-consciousness of the separate nations proceeded to cast about for a rational basis for itself. The dynastic principle was no longer capable of providing one—too many princes had cheerfully placed their people at the conqueror's disposal, a religious basis

was impossible because faith was no longer strong enough, and if it had been, Christianity could only have united the nations, a new dividing principle was what people were seeking.

They found it in the theory of races. Arguing from a (highly problematical) original racial unity, they sought to restore that unity and on this corporate feeling to build up the state, which was to embody the ideal of the race and constitute the highest conceivable tie uniting these kinsmen and hence also the supreme fountain of morality. The less a nation had of real, historical solidarity, the more the idea of race was insisted on, hence the greatest noise was made about it in Germany, the real cradle of modern nationalism.

Nationalism now sought to erect a structure that should unite everybody of the same race and language (the two things being wrongly identified) and, as far as possible, the same religion, and then to organise the collective personality thus created, which knew no law superior to itself, with the greatest possible thoroughness.

Unfortunately, no state came up to the required standard of racial and cultural unity. There were always members of the same race living under foreign governments and cultures, and, conversely, each state contained minorities of foreign blood. The consequences were inevitable: in the former case the minorities were claimed by their kinsmen, in the latter they were suppressed, with greater or less rigour in proportion to their importance. The first process gave rise to movements extending beyond the borders of the state like Pan-Germanism, Pan-Slavism, etc., the second to racial struggles within the state. In addition to this, attempts were made to transplant this racial culture to countries outside Europe too. In this case, however, the racial motive was after all inadequate and the desire for wealth and power displayed itself naked



and unashamed: it was a case not of nationalism but of imperialism. Thus the inevitable clash of the different racial nationalisms and imperialisms finally led to the great conflict.<sup>1</sup>

The human race has now turned away from this sort of nationalism and towards the ideal of internationalism, towards the League of Nations. At the same moment, in apparent contradiction to this, nationalism in its most acute form is rampant. It is the basis of the new states that are growing up in Bohemia, Poland and the Balkans. The peoples of those countries, having been prevented in the past from developing their individualities freely, are now making up for lost time and going through a stage which other countries already have behind them.

With nations, as with individuals, it is their age that determines their attitude, and their right, to individualism. The family of nations, like any other family, has to succeed in holding the balance between the generations: the submission to discipline and the renunciation of authority must both be voluntary.

It is not, however, really true to say that nationalism is now being superseded by internationalism, for their mutual interplay has never ceased. The rise of racial nationalism was accompanied by that of international socialism and international capitalism, which are anti-nationalist in tendency. It was an age of conflict between the idea of national unity for each separate people and that of international class-unity, based on community of economic interests. Nationalism relied on racial, internationalism on class solidarity. Universalism is bound to

<sup>1</sup> Nationalism moreover denied the existence of a common culture (common to all European nations at least) and laid exclusive stress on the culture of individual races. Instead of the mighty tree in its entirety it only saw one branch of it, and the points in which that branch differed from and excelled all the rest.

win. At the present moment the only question still in dispute is, through which channel it is going to attain victory, whether the world organisation is going to be built up on the corporate feeling of the working classes or on the common interests of capital. It seems to me that even this gap is not unbridgeable, and that the interests of both organisations, properly understood, are not contradictory.

Nations, like individuals, I said, have their youth and their manhood. Youth has the right to develop its individuality, manhood the duty of subordinating that individuality to something higher.

The tree must develop freely if it is to bear fruit, but it cannot retain this fruit. It is as harmful to wait for the fruit to rot as it would be to pick it before it is ripe. A nation needs to have reached full maturity after its own kind before it can realise that this maturity is after all not the final goal. It is only the individual who has freely developed all his capabilities that can think universally; in the same way a nation has to go through the phase of nationalism before it can get beyond it. Nationalism is not the opposite of internationalism, but the road that leads to it, it is imperfect internationalism.

Every effort that releases man from his original isolation already points the way to universalism. One of the stages on this road is nationalism. Its ideal is a union of human beings on a national basis, organised as a state, without which a nation cannot develop its individuality.

Nationalism is a nation's duty until it has reached maturity, when it has done that, it must recognise that this nation-state is not the last word and set its face towards universalism.

Many and great are the obstacles and sacrifices that await it on this road, but evolution knows no other. Forms

of life die out when they become stereotyped and from their remains new life springs.

Life is always growing, always in flux; infinite plurality dwells within its unity. Notions like nationalism and internationalism are absurd trivial things when one considers them statically and in isolation, mere catchwords, the small change of everyday political life; but when we look for the meaning behind these symbols, the contradiction is resolved and we realise that there is only one road along which humanity can advance, the road that leads to unity. We realise that nationality is a stage on this road, a stopping-place that may not, cannot be its goal; but we also realise that internationalism, the League of Nations, is no fixed norm to be imposed on the world by force, but merely a further stage. To our reason it appears the final consummation, but our feeling is conversant with infinity.

## 2.—ZIONISM AND ITS OPPONENTS

ZIONISM is a collective name for a great variety of movements, but at the root of it lies the insistence on the idea of the Jewish nation. That the Jews are a nation and not merely a religious community is the first article in the Zionist creed. Since this nation possesses no territory, Zionism demands that its ancient home, Palestine, should be restored to it, in order that it may build up a Jewish national life on its soil. Zionists are divided over the question whether cultural, economic, or religious considerations are to predominate in carrying out this plan, but on the fundamental notion of a Jewish nation on Jewish soil they are unanimous.

Zionism is the nationalism of the Jews. Who are its opponents?

Its opponents are all those Jews who deny the existence of a Jewish nation. (I am not concerned here with the Gentile opponents of Zionism who disapprove of it, e.g., on political grounds, but only with its opponents inside Jewry.)<sup>1</sup>

The anti-Zionist regards himself as a citizen of his native country, on exactly the same footing as its other citizens and only differing from them in the religion he professes, e.g., to take one example only, the one nearest to hand, as a German citizen of Jewish faith.

There are, of course, many intermediate stages between these extremes, but it is precisely the extreme points of

<sup>1</sup> Orthodox opinion also condemns Zionism, on the ground that a return to the Promised Land must not be brought about in that way, but that is a mere question of form, which does not touch the real matter at issue, so that we do not regard orthodox opinion as inimical to Zionism.

view, the opposite ends of the pole, that we need to define, in order to discover whether even these extreme opposites cannot be reconciled.

On the one hand the Zionist bases his whole doctrine on the existence of a Jewish nation; the "Assimilationist" (I use the term for the sake of brevity without any suggestion of criticism), on the other hand, denies the existence of this nation and regards himself as part of the German nation.

To all appearance only one of them can be right.

But appearance is deceptive.

Is the Assimilationist then a German professing the Jewish faith, just as there are Catholic and Protestant, perhaps even Buddhist, Germans?

Is he related to, say, a French Jew by nothing but his faith? What if they are both baptised or both unbelievers? Can it be seriously maintained that all kinship between them has ceased? Certainly not. The whole theory is wrong. A Jew remains a Jew independently of religion, for the simple reason that a Jewish race exists—indeed, if there is such a thing as a "race" anywhere, it is the Jewish

The Assimilationist is therefore wrong.

The Zionist, like all true nationalists, believes in races (here again I am deliberately neglecting less extreme views). according to him a Jew is simply a Jew, a German simply a German.

This is doubtful even in the case of the German, he may, for instance, be Polish or Danish as well. In the case of the Jew it is simply not true. A German Jew is neither simply German nor simply Jewish.

The Zionist is thus also mistaken.

He and the Assimilationist both base their views on the doctrine of racial nationalism, which rejects the notion that a person may have two "nationalities" at the same

time; but is not a Welshman (Celtic race) also a Briton (so-called Anglo-Saxon race)? Are there not German Americans, and even German-Jewish Americans, and so on? The fact is that race as the ground of nationality is an absurdity.

I have stated elsewhere that I do not condemn nationalism but regard it as a stage through which every nation has to pass, but to do so it must have one thing that the Jews have hitherto lacked, namely, a country. That, and not race, is the basis of a healthy nationalism

One can easily belong to two and even many more nationalities, but one can only be a son of one country.

And a nation without a country of its own is no nation.

The Assimilationist is therefore right in denying the existence of a Jewish nation today, only his reasons are wrong.

As long as a Jewish Palestine existed a Jewish nation existed too, in spite of the fact that the majority of Jews were already living abroad.

The Zionist is wrong in speaking of a Jewish nation today, but the moment his idea of a Jewish Palestine is realised he will begin to be right

The Jewish nation has existed in the past, today it is non-existent, but it may exist again before long

That is the resolution of that contradiction

But the solution of the Jewish problem is another matter. The existence of a Jewish nation will not in itself solve it. Behind the controversy over the existence of such a nation lies the problem of its place in the world. The object for which both sides are striving is that the Jews and the rest of the world should live at peace with one another. Only a fraction of the Jews, a tiny minority, will return to Palestine and become a Jewish nation once more, whereas the majority will only be still further hampered in their efforts to establish harmonious

relations with their fellows—at least so many people think. The tension would be accentuated instead of being relieved.

The Zionist and the Assimilationist both take a one-sided view of this question: hence their apparent opposition.

The Zionist is an individualist who fails to see that evolution has already progressed beyond the individualist stage, while the Assimilationist believes that by suppressing all individualism he can skip one stage on the road to universalism.

The Zionist wants to reverse a process already accomplished, the Assimilationist to suppress something that is still with us in the interests of the future.

Both of them want to live at harmony with the world, and both are trying to achieve this by suppressing an essential element in existence. But the true way to harmony always lies through the full development of the whole. The individual person and the individual nation are both under an obligation to develop their personalities to their full extent.

In this way we find a basis of agreement. Individualism and universalism must both be given their due. A German Jew must become both a German and a Jew instead of being neither.

But why, if the solution is really so simple, is agreement so hard to reach?

History provides the answer to this question. Assimilationism and Zionism arose at different periods. The latter grew up out of the former and is at odds with it, as each generation is with the preceding one. Every period has its ideal which it thinks absolutely right and which the succeeding period is consequently bound to think absolutely wrong, the reason being that it was right only relatively and for a certain period.

What is now looked down upon as Assimilationism was the highest ideal of the generation, almost extinct now, for whom the emancipation of the Jews was an actual experience, the generation which saw itself released from the ghetto and regarded that as the beginning of fraternisation between Jews and Gentiles. It believed that the day had already dawned when all antagonism would disappear and was determined to clear away all obstacles on its side—an ambition the reverse of contemptible. Events, however, failed to justify these expectations. Anti-Semitism grew up and flourished, pogroms became a regular institution. But no generation is prepared, or able, to repudiate its ideal, and so this one regarded everything contrary to its ideas as a passing phase and persisted in believing that if the Jews on their side did their utmost to suppress and deny all difference between themselves and Gentiles, that would be enough to get rid of those differences altogether.

Zionism was the next generation's protest against this ostrich-like policy. The new generation, seeing only that their fathers had not reached their goal, declared that goal in itself as false, nay, unworthy. (Incidentally, this is an exact counterpart to the contrast between the ideals of the generations of 1848 and 1870. Now we have the third generation going back to the "obsolete" point of view of their grandfathers and condemning that of their fathers as erroneous.)

It now became the ideal of the Jews to recognise their racial peculiarities and underline them. This is an entirely natural reaction, for, at a time when every race gloried in being that race and no other, the Jews were bound to feel humiliated by having, so to speak, to borrow their glory from other races—and reluctant ones at that.

Each generation is thus right for its own time. It is



our inability to conceive life as movement that makes it so hard for the generations to understand each other. Assimilationism came out of the ghetto, it had learnt to hate segregation and aimed at fusion. Zionism saw that the attempt at fusion had failed and sought salvation in segregation.

We know that individualism is only a stage on the road to universalism, but we also recognise that only an individualism that has been able to develop freely will, voluntarily and from inner necessity, transcend itself and pass over into universalism. This is a general maxim which is confirmed by the history of all nations.

But the peculiar feature of the Jewish problem is that both tendencies have got to be given their fair chance at the same time. The European nations have been through the first stage and are ready to pass on to the second. The Jews still have the first stage to make up in the future, when they have a country of their own, at the same time the majority of them have already to be ripe for the next.

At the same moment as the Jew is learning to be a Jew once more in Palestine, he must be a full-grown citizen of the world elsewhere.

This, however, sounds much harder than it really is. Were the Jew only a Jew, as the Zionist thinks, or only a German (or Frenchman, etc.) as the Assimilationist thinks, it would, of course, be impossible, but since he is already a Jew and a German, or rather, a Jew and a citizen of the world, all he needs to do is to admit frankly to himself and the world what he is—and he is going to be allowed to do this for the first time in the near future—and the thing is done.

To him, more than anyone else, applies that enigmatical saying, "Become what you are".

When one examines the Jews in different countries

more closely, one sees how the task is divided between them. Thus the Jew in Western Europe is, as a citizen of the world, ahead of his time, but in danger of entirely losing his own individuality, and *vice versa* in other countries.

The Jewish problem is unique, but it is no more incapable of solution than other problems, for the simple reason that this uniqueness extends to the position of the Jews. If the Jews have difficulties and obstacles to overcome which are unknown to other people, they can boast compensating advantages peculiar to themselves.

I think I can claim that we have resolved the real contradiction. We saw that the aim of both parties is harmony, equilibrium. The Zionist hopes to reach it by strengthening the individual element, the Assimilationist by strengthening the universal. Both are wrong when they seek to eliminate the opposing tendency, both are right when they say that their own is indispensable. At one moment in the world's history the one is more in harmony with the needs of the hour, at the next the other. But the exceptional position of the Jews and the exceptional nature of our times between them make both tendencies indispensable at this particular moment.

But how will they attain their goal?

The motives and ends that a man professes are often, perhaps always, the opposite of the motives that actually, unknown to himself, urge him on and of the ends he actually achieves. The ways of evolution, or (for those who cannot believe in a blind evolution) of Providence, are inscrutable and only become intelligible as they develop. Every idea helps the cause of its opposite. The Assimilationist believes that he wants to be a German and that he will achieve his end by surrendering the Jew in himself—and the result of his efforts is a revival of the

specifically Jewish character and a sharpening of the contrast between it and its environment.

The Zionist believes that he wants to be a Jew pure and simple and that the way to his goal is through combating Assimilationism. The actual result of his efforts will be, more than anything else, to reawaken the Jew in his opponents, since it will be the Jews that do not go back to Palestine who are most affected by Zionism.

The Zionist in Palestine will see that it is not necessary for him to go through the stage of narrow-minded nationalism. His efforts to create a Jewish nation on the model of the European nations in the nineteenth century will fail, because the future lies under the sign of international union. The Jewish nation in its own country will grow more and more like other nations, for the simple reason that its economic and social conditions will cease to be exceptional—that is to say, the Jew in Palestine will become less Jewish in many ways. On the other hand the Assimilationist in Europe will see that his ambition to be a German pure and simple was a mistaken one because the Germans themselves have ceased to be Germans pure and simple, moreover, he will discover that it is precisely the Jew in him that people value<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The "European Concert" was always a woefully discordant affair, but the metaphor is well chosen—human beings and nations do resemble an orchestra. If each instrument tries to assert itself at the expense of the rest, the result is discord and confusion, if they voluntarily subordinate themselves to the whole, it is harmony. What is wanted in an orchestra is not subordination on the basis of equal rights for every instrument or the suppression of this or that one, but that each instrument should make its own proper noise—the violin must not try to be a flute nor the 'cello imitate the harp.

The pleasantness of the total effect depends on the voluntary co-ordination of the individual pleasant sounds. To achieve this harmony our human orchestra must have a conductor who is recognised by all and unites their wills. Europe, indeed the whole world, is looking for such a conductor—he may be called an ideal or a religion. The human race has been looking for him all along unconsciously, and now it almost looks as if its search were becoming conscious.

Sooner or later—and in my opinion very soon—the day will come when people realise that a nation, like an individual, can help others best by remaining true to itself, but also that in order to remain true to oneself one must help others.

### 3—EAST AND WEST

“For East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet”

This line of Kipling's has been quoted, both orally and on paper, far too often. People make things easy for themselves by laying it down as a fundamental axiom that there is an unbridgeable gulf fixed for all time between the East and the West. I can think of no more erroneous judgment, no more superficial view, than that contained in Kipling's line.

First of all, what is East and what is West? Where does one end and the other begin? The earth is round, the far West (America) is immediately next to the far East (Japan), not furthest from it, and this is not true in the geographical sense only. When we talk of opposite extremes we ought always to think of a circle, not of a straight line and the point in which it ends. Absolute individualism, i.e., individualism which had included the whole world in itself, would thereby have become universalism, and universalism could not be universalism at all without individualism. It is the same with the antithesis of East and West, each is conditioned by the other, and if all its implications are followed out West becomes East, East West.

This preliminary observation is intended not as a subtle paradox but as a reminder that the antithesis between them, considered as an immutable principle, is a fiction.

As a general rule, when people talk of East and West they mean Asia and Europe, which are somewhat more definite notions, though even they have a fixed meaning

only for geography. It has long been realised that there is a gradual transition from one to the other, hence the invention of the term "semi-Asia", which is applied, in a cultural sense particularly, to Russia and the Balkans; while parts of Asia are called semi-European—Asia Minor, for instance—which implies a recognition of the fact that East and West overlap and can no longer be kept in separate compartments.

Therefore, in order to make comparison, we must take the East at its most oriental, say in China or India, and set it against modern Europe. A second factor that has to be taken into consideration is time. Neither Asia nor Europe is, in the spiritual sense, a fixed concept. While Asia has apparently stood still during the last few centuries (hence the cliché of the "unchanging East"), Europe has only reached the full development of its individuality during them. Europe is at its most European now, hence the greatest possible contrast would be between the spirit of modern Europe and that of Asia in earlier times.

The spirit of the Upanishads, Buddhism and the sages of China may stand for the spirit of the East and be compared with that of modern, i.e. post-Renaissance, Europe, as representing the spirit of the West.

Such a comparison reveals two fundamentally opposite conceptions of life, two ideals so completely at variance that any reconciliation of them seems at first sight impossible.

The European ideal is an active, individualistic, intellectual one. The Westerner regards Man as distinct from Nature and opposed to her, he subdues Nature and takes a pride in her conquest by the human spirit. Man lords it over the world of Nature and strives to bring it more and more completely under the sway of human law. He believes in progress, which consists for him in rapid means

of communication, discoveries and inventions; he believes in organisation and machinery, the ultimate object of which is to produce more and more goods, so that the power of the individual (or of his nation, to which he extends his ideal) may be increased to the highest possible pitch. The spirit of the West is active, in that it seeks power.

It is also individualistic, for it detaches the human being first of all from Nature and then from his fellows. The Westerner has no doubt that the greatest man is the man with the most highly developed individuality, the "man of the Renaissance", the man with a strong hand and a steady eye, the individual who towers above the mass of his fellows—in short, the ruler is for him the highest type of humanity. Alexander and Cæsar, Napoleon and Bismarck are his heroes. He has his intellectual heroes too, of course, but for the greatest, like Leonardo or Goethe, his admiration is half reluctant, coming only from the head: they leave him cold. Why? Because he feels, quite rightly, that they are impersonal, universal. The successful warrior, either in the material or the intellectual sphere, is his ideal—hence phrases like "a captain of industry", "the Napoleon of shipping", etc.

The spirit of the West is intellectual: for what it values is the creation of the intellect. "Mind" to the modern Westerner means intellect and nothing else. The history of modern Europe is the history of the emancipation and development of the intellect. All European text-books, down to the very latest times, teach that "human progress" consists in the emancipation of the human spirit from the "blind superstition of the Middle Ages", the "shackles of religion", primitive "unscientific" notions, etc., etc.

It is excessively difficult for the modern European to

see how one-sided this doctrine is, for his whole education is based on it.

The Renaissance, the Reformation and the French Revolution are the most prominent landmarks in the history of this emancipation, but the greatest intellectual weapon in the war against the "powers of darkness" is natural science, the steady growth of our knowledge of the physical world.

The real difference between the modern West and the East depends ultimately on European natural science and nothing else

Through Kepler and Galileo, Newton, Darwin and Haeckel, the modern European has completely exploded the biblical account of creation, and set up the *Déesse Raison* in the place of God—this last action being symbolised by the French Revolution

He has made a God of intellect

The ideal creation of the Western spirit thus remains the great individual endowed with the unlimited power that reason has given him. Reason makes him lord over Nature; it is through reason that he rules over his fellow creatures (for the apostle of brute force is a barbarian, not a modern European) and especially over other races, and his reason has taught him that he is subject to nothing, unless it be certain problematical laws of Nature.

Ruler over Nature and his fellow creatures, Lord of the world—such is the creation of Intellect, such the ideal of the modern spirit.<sup>1</sup>

Passivity, universality and intuition are the distinguishing marks of the East. There Man, instead of feeling himself distinct from Nature, feels himself a part of her,

<sup>1</sup> As I have already remarked, this "modern" spirit is in truth already far from modern, being the spirit of the nineteenth century, but it is this spirit that proclaimed the antithesis of East and West and keeps it alive. I am also aware that its triumph was not absolute or universal, but it inspired the leading men, it was the prevailing spirit of the age, the specifically European spirit



closely akin to plants and beasts. He does not stand in opposition to the world and hence has no desire to overcome or control it. He wants to get into tune with it, his object is not power but harmony with all living things. He wants to lose himself in Nature, yield himself up to her, become one with her. That is why I call him passive.

That is also why individualism is his enemy. "Slay everything in thee that separates" is the teaching of his wise men. "The self is the cause of all suffering, slay the self", is the central theme of the Upanishads and Buddhism alike. This teaching is unintelligible to the European, because individuality to him is the one thing needful, whereas to the Asiatic it is the deadly enemy of the true life. By blending with the universe a man *becomes* the universe and attains to *Nirvāna*, the state of ineffable bliss.

Happiness without consciousness is an impossibility to the European mind, something no better than the happiness of plants and animals. Can one be happy without being aware of one's happiness, asks the European? And his reason answers, No.

And yet does not the supreme ecstasy of love seem to him closely akin to unconsciousness ("his senses left him")? Have not his poets from time immemorial felt that love and death are closely akin?

*An semen Kussen vergehen ich wollt*,<sup>1</sup> Goethe makes Gretchen cry, and Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* ends with the climax of the *Liebestod*.

Art feels what reason cannot understand, because art, being the child of feeling, not a product of reason, grasps the nature of things intuitively.

This intuition is the genius of the East. The East despises the intellect, hence the sciences could only develop in Europe, but the beginning of their heyday (at

<sup>1</sup> I would fain die upon his kisses

the Renaissance) coincides with the beginning of the decay of art.

The Asiatic is, and remains, the supreme artist and poet; it is only contact with Europe and its civilisation that makes him cease to be an artist, as we can see in the case of Japan.

The heroes of the East are not its emperors and rulers. Where history does preserve the latter's names, it adds, as so often in China, that they were great poets, painters or philosophers. But the real hero is the sage—Confucius or Lao-tse or Buddha.

The ideal of the West is the conqueror of the world, that of the East is the renouncer of the world, the conqueror of self.

So diametrically opposed are East and West—when we evaluate their opposing qualities. Now, however, we will attempt to get clear about the grounds of this antithesis and see whether it too does not turn out to be more apparent than real when we understand its causes.

We have taken modern Europe and compared it with an Asia that has almost ceased to exist. Had we taken, say, Gothic Europe instead, we should have seen that its ideal was closely akin to the Asiatic ideal. The reason is not far to seek.

Our European civilisation rests on two foundations, the Græco-Roman and the Christian. But the second, Christianity, is of Asiatic origin and is the link between East and West—as Palestine is by virtue of its geographical position.

The history of Europe—so short in comparison with Asia's—is the history of the struggle between these two elements.

Greece is the birthplace of the European intellect and European science—even its art is individualistic.

Rome brought organisation, law, and the spirit of conquest. From the moment of its birth, Christianity, in accordance with its essential nature, was at daggers drawn with Græco-Roman civilisation. It is the struggle of feeling against reason. It would take too long here to follow out this struggle in detail, but in general we may say that since the Renaissance victory has inclined to the side of reason. Its principal stages were, as we have already mentioned, the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Revolution, with temporary reactions in the shape of the counter-reformation (Baroque art) and the Romantic period. The thing, therefore, that distinguishes Asia from Europe is not feeling, which is common to them both, but the development of reason at the expense of feeling, which is peculiar to modern Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Feeling, as an instinct, ranks below reason, it is an earlier product of evolution, possessed by animals also. Reason, intellect, belongs to Man alone (and in a rudimentary form to certain higher animals) and it looks as if Europe had been marked out for the task of perfecting it. While this was going on Asia seemed to be standing still, until renewed contact with Europe woke it up.

Europe introduced individualism into Asia, but not before that individualism had reached its zenith in the nineteenth century. What we are now witnessing is a bridging of the gap between East and West. individualism is raising its head in the East at the same time as it is passing over into universalism in the West.

We know that reason, transcending itself, reverts to feeling, leads back to intuition, that individualism turns back into universalism.

The history of civilised humanity is the history of the efforts, struggles and compromises of Asia and Europe.

<sup>1</sup>It is strange that the decadence of art in the last century or two, undisputed as it is, has never caused Europeans to doubt whether their development really constitutes an entirely desirable form of progress.

Asia met Europe, and the result was Greek art, Homer and the tragedians. Asia met Europe, and Christianity, which combined the wisdom of Alexandria and of Palestine, and Byzantine art came into the world. Their contact in the Crusades produced Gothic. After that intercourse between them ceased. All the materials for the growth of Europe were to hand. In the Renaissance Europe became independent, asserted its freedom, and today it has the results of its unfettered liberty, its individualism, before its eyes.

The relationship in some ways resembles that of mother and son. For a long period the "mother of humanity" is the giving party. Gradually the child's individuality develops—often in active opposition to its mother—until it is in a position to give too, without ceasing to receive. Modern Europe was in that stage of growth when one necessarily regards the development of one's individuality as the supreme object of life. The youth imagines himself far wiser than his mother and rates his masculine reason far above her feminine feeling, yet no one, surely, would maintain that there was an unbridgeable gulf fixed between mother and son! Only when he becomes a father does the son grasp the meaning and sanctity of motherhood, and learn from it that there are things which lie far beyond the reach of reason.

As a matter of fact, Europe has already begun to learn from Asia once more.

For the eighteenth century Asia was still the country of *chiniserie*, it was acquaintance with the art of Asia (through the medium of Chinese porcelain) that first caused a revival of the notion that an Asiatic civilisation existed and might possibly possess quite valuable qualities.

It was about the middle of the nineteenth century that the East began once more to exercise a real influence on the European spirit. This was primarily due to the

spread of the knowledge of Indian metaphysics, which now for the first time became accessible, through the medium of translations, to others besides Sanskrit scholars. Hitherto people had regarded Athens and Jerusalem as the two bases of all culture; now they began to learn of older and deeper foundations. An important part in this process was played by archæology, with its revelations of the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian and, recently, Cretan civilisations.

Our text-books are still completely bounded by the exclusively European spirit, but our science has long ago recognised the connection between East and West and the dependence of Western on Eastern culture.

Then, towards the end of last century (not till the 'eighties) Japanese art became known, while the discovery of the greatest art of the East, Chinese painting, came later still. So that one may say without exaggeration that all existing ideas about the importance of Europe in the history of civilisation have been scrapped and that the books which shall give us the history of culture, art and the human spirit in the light of our present knowledge have still to be written.

Once this knowledge has become common property there will be nothing left of the absolute antithesis of East and West. We must not overlook the fact that while the spirit of the East has been making its way into Europe, Europe has in its turn exercised a strong influence on the East. The latter process has received more attention than the former, because it was chiefly of a material nature, and in our time material things are regarded as the most important.

Europe has introduced her civilisation into Asia, she has brought railways and factories, lighting and hygiene, security, law and order—in a word, organisation. These blessings ought not to be under-rated; but Europe has

over-rated them. In so far as European influence has extended to non-material things—which it has done only to a very small extent, chiefly in Japan—it is a matter of regret to the greatest minds of Asia (e g, Tagore), who are anxious to wean their compatriots from it. At this point it is enough to note that a two-fold process has been going on, the East exercising a spiritual influence on the West, Europe (and America) a material influence on the East, the result being that East and West are steadily drawing nearer to each other.

At the same time as the individualism of the West is conquering the East through its scientific organisation, the spirit of oriental universalism is gaining ground in Europe

Harmony arises from the contest of opposites, but as the process is continuous and the relative strength of the different forces is always changing, it cannot last.

Great epochs in the history of civilisation have arisen at times when such harmony has momentarily reigned.

I believe that the time for such an equilibrium is approaching and that most of the problems of the day are merely facets of this one fundamental problem. East and West are gradually penetrating each other, and the intensity of this fusion is going to be in keeping with the altered circumstances (we have robbed time and space of their separating power), the result will be the union of East and West.

In the last years before the War the oriental influence on Europe, and even more on America, was steadily growing.

It showed itself in such different spheres that the connection between its various manifestations was not always recognised.

In literature we find it, for instance, in Emerson and Whitman in America, in Edward Carpenter, and again in

a different way in Wilde, in England; in Flaubert and Mallarmé in France—Germany got it rather more at secondhand. The great Russians, both Tolstoy and Dostoievsky, are heralds of the truth of the East. Its influence is revealed unmistakably in the extraordinary success, all over Europe and America, of Tagore, a mind whose influence is only just beginning.

Since Kant European metaphysics have been steadily moving in the Indian direction, e.g., the doctrines of Schopenhauer, Hartmann and Bergson.

Music and the dance received a new stimulus from the East, as appeared most clearly in the magnificent performances of the Russian ballet, they in their turn influenced painting, which had been under strong far-Eastern influence ever since the days of Impressionism. Even fashions (Poiret) succumbed to orientalism.

Those who consider such spiritual influences of small importance as compared with material issues—that is to say, the majority, even now—can, nevertheless, hardly fail to see that the question of Asia has dominated the scene during the past twenty or thirty years.

The Russo-Japanese war, the annexation of Bosnia, the war in Tripoli (Mohammedan Africa is part of the East), the Morocco question, the question of the Bagdad railway, the Balkan wars, the disturbances and wars in China and Persia were all inter-related incidents in the struggle over the great problem of East and West. Europe had provided Asia with the arms with which to carry the struggle into the political field. Then came the world war, which has made a settlement of some kind inevitable.

Even the short-sighted recognise it as a burning question now. The problem of Turkey and, with it, the position of Egypt, Palestine, Mesopotamia and Persia, the problem of Indian autonomy, and of Japanese control of China—to

mention only a few of the most important issues—have now got to find a solution.

The moment has arrived for a grand squaring-up of accounts between Asia and Europe, and not only for them but for America, Australia and Africa also. The whole human race is on the point of settling its disputes.

There is no question here of partitioning Asia—the time for that is past, even if the desire still survives in the breasts of the imperialists of all nations—it is a question of finding a basis for compromise, reconciliation, universal concord.

The believer in *realpolitik* will smile at this idea and advance his opinion that after a certain amount of “eye-wash” each will pocket what he can lay hands on, but the idealist is always right in the long run, only, he may be centuries, perhaps even milleniums, out in his calculations.

But we are not merely reckoning on the victory of superior insight—that only comes very, very slowly, even if steadily—today we can also see highly important political factors at work in the same direction. At the junction of Asia and Europe lies Russia, where amid chaotic confusion and horror a new society is growing up. Europe looks on helpless while shattered despotism gives place not merely to the ideals of the West but to something new and terrible. The horrors of the Russian Revolution are indescribable because they are in direct proportion to the indescribable oppression which produced it, but the thing that is going to come to the top there—and not only there—is the Eastern ideal.

Socialism and Communism, like Christianity in the past, are merely masks assumed for the nonce by universalism. Because our times are materialistic, it uses materialistic arguments; having been reborn through the war, it fights with guns.



It will not destroy European society, but when it has transformed and renewed it that society will present an appearance closely related to that of the East.

For the East will at the same time adopt the good things that Europe has to offer it, chief of which are, in the material sphere, hygiene, and in the spiritual, more freedom for the individual. In the latter sphere Asia has rejected European materialism (even in Japan its victory is only on the surface and will not last), but the time is not far distant when Europe will also reject it. Materialism took its stand on the natural sciences, but it is precisely they who have already repudiated it. On closer examination "matter" has lost its solidity, revealed itself as *māya*, an illusion of the senses. The edifice which rested on it has been undermined. The last generation believed that it had lifted all veils; the greatest of the present one admit that they are faced with riddles. But to the East the external world has always been an illusion of the senses.

Thus in material and spiritual things alike the two are moving steadily towards a mutual understanding.

There is another movement which I believe to be destined to play a great part here, Zionism.

At the same time I regard Zionism as but one move in this vast game.

We have already formed an estimate of its significance for Jewry, but that is inseparable from its significance for humanity—the interests of the individual being always inseparable from those of the whole.

The Jew is the born intermediary between Asia and Europe. Through Christianity he carried the spirit of Asia into Europe (his part in the Russian Revolution is also profoundly significant), and if he goes back to Palestine, he will carry the spirit of Europe into Asia.

The new Palestine will be neither Asiatic nor European;

it will quite automatically produce that synthesis of East and West for which we have as yet no name.

It may be that here lies the meaning of the long apprenticeship to suffering which the Jew has had to go through in Europe. He has learnt everything that Europe had to teach and that he could not have learnt in Asia, but he has never been quite at home there. Now he will add the knowledge he has acquired to that which he has never forgotten, and make up the total. He understands the meaning of the desert and of the Steel Trust, the spirit of Montmartre and the spirit of Bagdad, and from their union in his brain (I do not, of course, refer to any single individual) the synthetic ideal will be born.

From time to time individualism and universalism are reconciled, then the struggle begins anew, till the final fusion is accomplished. Periods of reconciliation, when antagonisms cease, are periods of harmony, and great epochs in the history of the human race.

An epoch of this sort, the greatest that the human race has yet experienced and the most universal (for each one is greater and more universal than its predecessor), is now on the way.

The future will dismiss the antagonism of East and West with the same incredulous smile as we have for the struggles and antagonism between, say, Florence and Pisa in the Middle Ages.

#### 4.—JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

So much has been written through the centuries about the antagonism between these two religions, and their representatives have mostly been at such daggers drawn, that their common origin or, more accurately, the mother-daughter relation of Judaism and Christianity seems to have been quite forgotten.

Islam has always admitted its near kinship with Judaism, so that good relations between the adherents of the two faiths have been the rule, not the exception, not so Christianity, which looked on itself as a refutation not a continuation of Judaism. But this aversion springs precisely from its great similarity and close blood-relationship to Judaism. No hatred is so deep as the hatred of relations who have once fallen out, for hatred and love both presuppose intense mutual interest.

For a long time the Romans regarded the Christians as one of the many Jewish sects, and so, after all, they were to begin with.

What made this profound hostility possible?

If one tries to contrast Judaism and Christianity in order to examine them, one is met at the outset by a difficulty

Everybody knows what Judaism is, for its doctrines have remained fixed for thousands of years, but what Christianity is, nobody can exactly say; in fact there is an endless variety of opinions on the subject.

The reason is this very little is known of its historical beginnings and throughout all its career it has never ceased to change and develop. People have tried over and over again to get back to the original teaching of

Christ, but it has always proved impossible to re-discover this original teaching because it has only been communicated to posterity through indirect written traditions of varying degrees of authenticity.

Hence one can only compare Judaism with the doctrine of the Christian Church in its various forms. Paul, not Christ, is the founder of the Church, and its most characteristic form, right down to modern times, has been the Roman Catholic Church, the only one that has remained unchanged almost from the beginning of the Christian era. The Greek and the Protestant Churches are much later forms, and the latter make no claim to universal validity for their doctrines.

Until further notice, then, by "Christianity" we shall understand Catholicism.

To a superficial view, the main crux in the quarrel between Judaism and Christianity is their attitude to the person of Christ. The Jews were waiting for the Messiah. One section of them thought that he had come in the person of Jesus. Jesus was crucified by his enemies,<sup>1</sup> and worshipped as the Son of God by his supporters and their successors. In Christian eyes the Jews were blasphemers who had denied Christ, while the Christians, in Jewish eyes, were blasphemers and disciples of a false prophet.

Audacious as it may seem to characterise as superficial an antagonism that has cost oceans of blood and inflicted untold misery on the human race, I will, nevertheless, attempt to explain my reasons for thinking that it is so in spite of everything.

In the conflict between Judaism and Catholicism I see the conflict between Israel and the Græco-Roman world.

<sup>1</sup> We will not discuss the question whether Jesus was condemned to be crucified on the initiative of his Jewish enemies or at the wish of the Romans, as a stirrer-up of strife, to do so would only cause confusion here, for which reason we adhere to the accepted tradition.

Catholicism, and with it the whole of European civilisation, rests on two pillars, the Jewish tradition and the classical or Græco-Roman tradition. It is an attempt to create a synthesis of the two. It must have looked at first as if this synthesis, which enabled Catholicism to spread all over Europe, had been successfully achieved, but the later history of Catholicism reveals a constant struggle between these two contradictory forces.

Catholicism was not the heir of Israel alone; it very soon became the heir of the Roman imperial ideal, and at the same time the guardian of the artistic tradition of the ancient world.

The latter task became the special province of Eastern Catholicism, which subsequently split off as the Greek Church, Byzantine art preserving and carrying on the artistic tradition of ancient Greece, but the legacy of Rome remained in the keeping of the Roman Church.

The Church tried to carry out the Roman idea of universal empire using religious means. She did not, however, base her authority, her claim to this empire, on her position as Rome's heir, but on the privilege, conferred on her by Christ and the Apostles, of acting as God's representative on earth.

Hence everybody who denied the divinity of Christ was her deadly enemy, because he thereby questioned her title to power. That is the real ground of her hostility to the Jews and also of her untiring efforts to convert them.

The real antagonism is, therefore, not between Judaism and Christianity as such, but between Judaism and Rome.

The Roman element in the Church led to the struggle between the Pope and the Emperor, and, in the course of time, thrust the Jewish element more and more into the background as the Church became increasingly worldly—a process which reached its height at the Renaissance. The

Jewish element had disappeared from Catholicism, but with it went the Christian too.

Then came the Reformation. The Reformation was an attempt to get back to Christ, and hence caused a mitigation of the hostility towards the Jews.

Whenever the attempt has been made to get back to primitive Christianity, this rapprochement with the Jews has always followed. We find it in Cromwell's time among the Puritans (who liked to think of themselves as the "lost ten tribes"), and later among the Quakers and Wesleyans. Wherever men rejected Rome's claim to universal authority, there the antagonism became milder, but it never disappeared altogether.

So far we have only been considering the effects of this hostility on the Christian side, but it also existed on the side of the Jews. The question of the person of Christ was not the real obstacle to rapprochement on that side either.

The rise of Christianity coincided almost exactly with the collapse of the Jewish kingdom. In these unfortunate circumstances the Jews became homeless wanderers scattered over the face of the earth.

But their consciousness surviving, in spite of the destruction of its natural basis, they set out to underline and emphasise the one thing that was their exclusive possession and marked them out from the rest of the world, namely, their religion, which they proceeded to fence round with anxious care, treating every deviation as a grave crime. The promised land was lost, but the Law remained.

Until then Judaism had been a living, growing thing, but now every possibility of development was cut off.<sup>1</sup>

From its primitive beginnings to the Prophets there

<sup>1</sup> The sense of this unbroken development is one of the strongest hidden driving-forces behind Zionism

had been a steady crescendo; now, through the force of circumstances came a stand-still, if not a decline.

A straight line had led from the Prophets by way of the Essenes (the first of the monks) to the teaching of the New Testament. Now they turned about and retraced their steps: the whole of Judaism was supposed to be contained in the laws of Moses, and so far as any development took place at all it was for long confined to the elucidation of those laws.

At the time when Christianity came into the world the barriers between Jews and adherents of other faiths had practically been broken down: Jewish and Greek civilisation had amalgamated in Alexandria, Jewish and Roman in Palestine, but now the barriers were built up again as high as possible by both parties.

Thus both Jews and Christians, in obedience to an unconscious urge, had their part in exacerbating the antagonism, which persisted because both antagonists departed in their different directions from the Christian ideal.<sup>1</sup>

This antithesis is not, therefore, grounded in the teaching of Christ. Not only is there no antagonism between Jewish and Christian ethics, but there is none between the Jewish and the Christian dispensations either.

Christ did not bring with a him a new Law but a new interpretation of the old, eternal Law.

Every religion seeks to educate man in the way of righteousness, to sublimate his primitive egoism and instruct him in his duty towards the world. That is what the Law is for.

<sup>1</sup> It was Heine, I think, who said that the mission of the Jews would be accomplished on the day when the last Christian was converted to Christianity. The cause of their mutual hostility was not that the Jews rejected Christ while the Christians adopted His teaching, but that both rejected and misinterpreted His teaching. Christianity is nowhere to be found even now.

The basis of this duty varies according to the state of development of the nation to which this Law is given (or which evolves it out of itself).

There is an analogy between the education of an individual and the education of a nation.

The small child is forbidden to transgress by the voice of parental authority and is punished if it disobeys, its obedience is founded on the fear of punishment. As it gets older, it learns to obey in order not to give pain to its parents, it obeys out of love. The adult man fulfils his obligations because he has recognised them as an inner law he obeys himself. Religion puts a man in the position of a child of his "heavenly father". Primitive Judaism inculcates obedience to a just but wrathful father who punishes every offence. In the course of development this conception of God gradually lost its harshness, and in the New Testament wrath has turned into love. Its ethics imply spiritual maturity on the part of mankind; in other words, mankind was mature enough to comprehend them; but not to adopt them, and therein lies the tragedy of Judaism, and of Christianity too.

Religion seeks to sublimate individualism into universalism. Judaism represents a step in this process, it succeeded, through isolation, in helping universalism to victory within the limits of one nation, but evolution did not stop there, it tried to go on to share its victory with the whole world. This attempt has not yet been crowned with success, but it has not been abandoned on that account. The history of mankind is nothing more or less than a continual trying of new means to achieve this end.

But the antithesis between the Roman and Judæo-Christian ideals is also merely apparent. Their ideal is the same, only the means they employ differ.

Both aim at uniting the human race The Roman way



of setting about it is on material lines, through political supremacy, the Judæo-Christian through a change of heart.

The former is the European idea, the latter the Asiatic. The ideal of Christ is the symbol by means of which the East sought to transform the European spirit. The Judæo-Christian ideal reappears in every great spiritual movement in Europe. Wherever universalism wages war on individualism, there we find this "slave morality" ranged against the "master morality".

"Complete community of goods prevailed. All earnings were poured into the common purse, from which such members of the community as were unfit to work drew their sustenance. They abominated competition in private trade, war and all occupations aimed at war or gain and thus confined themselves to agriculture and peaceful trade".

Is that a picture of a return to nature *à la* Rousseau? Is it the teaching of Tolstoy, of Socialism or Communism? Of primitive Christianity? As a matter of fact it is taken from an article on the Essenes.

Such is the Judæo-Christian ideal which is always reappearing with new and up-to-date arguments against the prevailing form of injustice at the moment. And it will go on reappearing till mankind is ripe for it, has reached years of discretion; and that will not be for many hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years.

Evolution demands constantly increasing sacrifices from the individual. All growth, and therefore all life, is based on unceasing sacrifice. At a low stage of evolution the sacrifice is easy. The tree turns blossom into fruit and lets the fruit drop. The primitive organism splits in half without feeling pain. The higher the animal the more painful birth becomes, and the greater the sacrifice

that is demanded of egoism. The transition from beast to man and from primitive man to civilised man and beyond is based on the sublimation of the animal instincts. This development proceeds at the expense of the "natural impulses"—that is to say, it ear-marks an increasing proportion of spiritual energy for unselfish purposes, which is the only way in which this spiritual energy can rise to a higher plane and "build itself the body" that it needs. Man, as opposed to the animals, has a surplus of spiritual energy in excess of what he needs for the satisfaction of his physical needs. It is the business of education and the aim of evolution to divert this surplus from the ego and render it subservient to communal purposes. That is where the sacrifice comes in.

Man contains in himself both the forces which raise him up and those which drag him down to the animal state from which he has scarcely emerged, he symbolises them as the spirit of good and the spirit of evil, and offers sacrifice to them.

In primitive times we find human sacrifices, people imagined that they were obeying the will of the deity and getting rid of their "guilt" in offering up one of their fellows. Later on animals took the place of human beings as victims, the animal should purge their guilt. People sacrificed their valuables, gold and incense, too. But the process of development did not stop at that. Even the Essenes refrained from sacrifices and recognised that it was their lusts that they had to sacrifice. (Indian influences had probably penetrated to them, this interpretation of the idea of sacrifice had been arrived at in India long ago.) The highest conception of the idea of sacrifice is, however, the one which found expression in the symbolic figure of the Christ. Not merely the bad but the good must be sacrificed: it is precisely his best that a man must not try to keep for himself. Christ did not merely

sacrifice himself for his supreme aim—there were many martyrs before him—he sacrificed himself for the human race. God offered up what he loved best (for a man loves his son even more than himself) for mankind. The idea that was foreshadowed in the legend of Abraham's sacrifice is here made manifest.

The individual transcends himself by sacrificing his dearest, his all, and thereby wins eternal life, becomes the universe.

The profound impression which the ideal of Christ has made on the human race is due to the fact that it symbolises the object of human life in the noblest and clearest fashion, and says more to feeling than all the earlier symbols.

When the legends are interpreted from this point of view, the contrast between Judaism and Christianity, between Judaism and the Græco-Roman world, disappears, the words lose their meaning. Jews, Christians, and everybody else are making by different paths for the same goal.

From time to time a great leader arises (or is created by a nation's imagination, it is, at bottom, perfectly indifferent which), who once more shows mankind the way. He is invariably misunderstood, and the letter taken for the spirit, after which men squabble over contradictory false interpretations, till the symbol fades from view and its power is quenched.

When the meaning of a symbol is understood the symbol perishes, because it has then ceased to be of any use—but as long as a religion is alive it has a function to perform.

Many people may think it a waste of time that I should be writing here about symbols which (in their opinion) have long ceased to have any meaning for "educated people" and only continue to exercise any influence over

the "bigoted multitude". I do not share their opinion, for to my mind the meaning of the symbol is still far from being understood. I know also that when people substitute evolution or the laws of Nature for God they are only putting a new symbol in the place of the old one. The new symbol, however, fits the present mental condition of the human race, it is the form in which the creative and conservative force, the How of creation, appears intelligible to us. To the Why we are no nearer, indeed it seems to elude us more completely than ever. Truth remains one and the same; the veils which hide her from us fall off in the course of the centuries; but the better we get to know her the greater, more "divine", and yet at the same time the more remote, does she appear to us—like the sun, which seems furthest away from us when it is at its brightest, at midday.

## 5 —ARISTOCRACY AND DEMOCRACY

THE one logically possible opposite of democracy is not despotism and not monarchy but aristocracy.

Yet many even of those who know that the antithesis is between despotism and constitutional rule, monarchy and republic, democracy and aristocracy, still cling to the preconceived notion that democracy as such is "free", and that its opposite, whatever it is called, constitutes "tyranny". From this point of view there is nothing to choose between the democrat who equates democracy with freedom and its opposite with tyranny, and the anti-democrat who calls it licence and its opposite order. These are merely value-judgments, which vary according to the standpoint of the observer (similarly where one man sees the virtue of economy another sees the vice of avarice, and so with generosity and extravagance). They both imply an essential antagonism between aristocracy and democracy.

Let us see whether this essential antagonism really exists, whether democracy is definitely equivalent to freedom (or licence), aristocracy to tyranny (or order)—whether, indeed, they embody different ideals at all.

Aristocracy and democracy are not objects existing in the world, not facts, there is only an aristocratic principle and a democratic principle. Aristocracy means the rule of the competent, democracy the rule of the people, it is, however, clear on the one hand that the competent are also part of the people, and on the other that the people must always be represented and governed by the competent, i.e., not by just anybody and not by all of them

either Absolute democracy is an impossible proposition, government implies someone to be governed, and government by the people can only mean the right of the people to choose its governors.

All democracies are thus aristocracies on a popular basis

Since, therefore, there is no fundamental difference between the two, there is no reason either for supposing that the rule of the competent rests on any form of tyranny (or is more likely to preserve order), and that an extension of the popular power necessarily spells freedom (or licence).

That is the position, looked at purely theoretically

Nevertheless the feeling from which this assumption springs is entirely justified.

Life cares little for theories, political life nothing at all, and the verdicts of feeling are based on life, on practice, not theory.

And in practice aristocracy has been accompanied by tyranny (or order), democracy by licence (or liberty).

It all depends on who the competent are and who has entrusted them, as such, with the task of government, what matters is the way in which aristocracy and democracy have conducted themselves in history.

I have already assumed that democracy, government by the people, in the strict sense of the word, is in any case impossible, but even in the wider sense, there has never yet been a democracy, only attempts to introduce one. Democracy is an ideal—an ideal may be a nightmare to the man who disagrees with it—to which mankind is slowly approximating. In practice democracy signifies the method of government by which the people chooses its aristocrats, the larger the proportion of the population that take part in this choice or are themselves eligible for election, the more democratic is the state

Democracy thus signifies political freedom, the right to a say in the conduct of public affairs. That is the only sort of freedom that is logically bound up with democracy.

So far, however, almost every attempt to secure this freedom has been carried out by revolutionary means, because the aristocracy could not bring itself of its own free will to share its privileges with wider sections of the community, and since every revolution is bound to involve a relaxation, indeed a temporary eclipse, of law and order, a belief has arisen that the personal liberty which came with the revolution is an invariable concomitant of democracy. Revolution means anarchy, absence of government, and brings mob rule in its train. Though it has often been the means of getting to democracy, it is itself, by its arbitrary character, every whit as undemocratic as aristocracy.

We Europeans have always been governed by an aristocracy in some form or other (despotism as an institution is unknown among us), if we associate the idea of tyranny or of order with it, that is due to the character of the aristocracies we have known.

When all is said and done, the people who are fit to govern govern, in every age. When they cease to be fit, they are driven out or (which is rare) voluntarily abdicate, after a period of transition, to make way for a new aristocracy suited to the needs of the time. It is part of the evolutionary scheme that this aristocracy should be drawn from ever-widening sections of the population, should become increasingly democratic.

The form in which European society first achieved stability after the anarchy which followed the break-up of the ancient world was Feudalism. The king, to whom all land belonged by right of conquest, granted possession to his generals and conferred sovereign rights on them,

he created the nobility. At that time the competent rulers were undoubtedly the military commanders—nobility and aristocracy really were identical notions.

This nobility, which was hereditary, continued down to the most recent times to constitute the major portion of the ruling class; with the result that the notions of nobility and aristocracy came to be treated as identical.

The power of the nobility gradually increased as time went on.

Conflicts between the nobility on the one hand and the sovereign in league with the middle classes and the peasantry on the other, were frequent in this period, but they were only a passing phase, the sovereign and the nobility were indispensable to each other, no doubt because of the chronic impossibility of carrying on war without the latter's help, and a reconciliation took place once the royal power had proved itself superior to that of the nobles.

Now began the period of the great unitary states based on the concentration of power in the hands of the monarch. The actual task of government was delegated by him to the nobility, which gradually became a nobility of courtiers, while the aristocracy recruited itself for the most part from the hereditary nobility. The rule of the nobility now began to conflict with the aristocratic principle. The nobles no longer stood at the head of affairs in virtue of their natural character (which had fitted them to command armies), but simply by hereditary right, in many cases positions in which the new age needed new men were occupied by incompetents. It is impossible to consider in detail here how absolute the rule of the nobility was and how long it lasted in the various countries—in England, as is well known, it collapsed as early as Cromwell's time, in France not till the Revolution, in many countries only just the other day—but the point that must



be made is that it was not the aristocratic principle but a travesty of it that came to grief with the rule of the nobility.

The fury of the people was directed against the rule of the incompetent. The latter, being unable to justify their tenure of power on grounds of real superiority, fell back on force, on oppression, which gave rise to the idea that aristocratic government is based on tyranny.

The great rebellion against the power of the nobility was the French Revolution, since which the political life of Europe has been cleft asunder into two sharply opposed camps.

To all supporters of the old regime the Revolution was mere anarchy and licence, in contrast to the law and order that preceded it, all those who desired to put an end to the power of the incompetent saw nothing but tyranny in the latter, while in their own case they saw only the goal, which they called democracy, understanding by that nothing more than a democratic aristocracy.

So much was achieved. After many ups and downs power was lodged, in Western Europe, in the hands most fitted to wield it at the time.

The dominant interests of the age were bourgeois interests—trade, commerce and money.

There arose an aristocracy of commerce, industry and wealth, with which the old nobility blended (in varying degrees in different countries), at the same time taking to trade itself or forming ties of blood with the new aristocracy through marriage.

This less exclusive, more democratic aristocracy was entitled to rule as long as it met the needs of the time; for it is in accordance with justice that those to whom birth and education have given a better understanding and a wider grasp of contemporary problems should be at the top; what is unjustifiable is the assumption that these

advantages belong for all time to certain fixed classes. Times changed; universal education progressed and the working class raised its head. The determining factor here was the prodigious growth of industry, which herded the masses together in great cities and encouraged education at the same time as it made conditions of life harder.

History repeated itself, the masses demanding political liberty, while the governing classes took refuge in force rather than give way voluntarily.

Socialism came into existence and aroused fierce hostility, as before, the ruling classes saw nothing but red ruin in it, while it saw only "tyranny" in them. The world war, so it seemed, thrust Socialism into the background—a result for which many among the ruling classes in all countries had no doubt ardently hoped, but its consequences have done more than anything to make it a universal problem of the human race. Whatever incidents may yet occur in our time, there is no doubt how this struggle will end—it will end in the supremacy of an aristocracy resting on the broadest possible basis.

Thus history shows us a steady development from the rule of the few to the rule of the more numerous, it shows us that the circle from which the competent are drawn grows wider and wider, which means that the aristocracy becomes more and more democratic, even if this result is only achieved as the result of a constant struggle for power; it is not a jump from one extreme to another but a gradual process.

So much is clear, nevertheless, this settlement of the dispute satisfies only reason, not feeling.

Is that really all, feeling asks? Is "democracy" nothing but a catch-word for use in a battle with an opponent who is not an opponent at all? And feeling

answers, No. It believes in a positive democratic ideal, and it is not mistaken.

From the point of view of reason aristocracy is the only possible form of government, but it cannot satisfy feeling, because feeling runs ahead of reason.

In the democratisation of the aristocracy we see an example of the development from individualism to universalism

In this process there is nothing permanent, only an everlasting becoming, hence no form of government can be permanently satisfactory. It must always be growing more universal, if it will not do that, it comes to a violent end. The ideal of democracy is absolute universalism. If we once reached the stage in which all human beings were not merely equal before the law but equal in ability, there would be no government and no governed, nobody commanding and nobody obeying any longer, the moment would have arrived when all distinctions disappear, aristocracy and democracy would be one and the same thing, perfect equality would mean perfect fusion.

That is what feeling divines behind the word "democracy", hence the enthusiasm with which great spirits embrace the democratic ideal.

For them it is a religion, for it is the ideal which is the foundation of all religions.

Parliaments and elections, people's universities and infant welfare, political and economic liberty are not regarded by these enthusiasts as absolutely good but as means to the end. The religious enthusiasm of a Tolstoy or a Whitman, the faith that has made martyrs of many democrats, is directed towards the great ideal of humanity, universalism.

The motto of democracy is Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. Its opposition to aristocracy lies in the meaning it attaches to these words. Our world has been in

the past, and still is, individualistic. Hence, in everything that concerns the application of these ideas to the past or the present, the aristocrat is right.

Liberty is impossible without order, order without law, and the carrying out of law depends on force.

Equality is contrary to Nature, everything in Nature is unequal, individual, and it is just this that gives life its charm.

Fraternity is only possible between equals.

In practice the aristocrat has always proved right, and every "democratic" government has been compelled to act according to these aristocratic maxims.

No doubt democracy does in practice bring with it political liberty, a greater measure of equality, an increase of personal freedom for the many (at the price of limiting the excessive freedom of the few), through equality in education and living-conditions a greater measure of personal equality is gradually being introduced, and with it an increase of fraternity, but in spite of it all the democratic ideal will not be attained till the end of the world.

The thing that distinguishes aristocratic individualism from democratic universalism is, at bottom, its attitude to the idea of equality. The aristocratic principle is based on the inequality we actually see in the world around us, the democratic ideal is the equality which lies beyond inequality and is the goal of the world's unconscious striving.

The aristocrat makes a mistake if he regards the present state of affairs as permanently given, the democrat if he shuts his eyes to it and seeks to make equality the foundation of his structure when it can only serve as its coping-stone.

Democracy is the bourne to which the road called Aristocracy leads.

Why, then, does history reveal this bitter, ceaseless strife between the two? The reason is not far to seek, it lies in human nature.

The idea that might is right comes more naturally (because it is more primitive) to every human being than the idea that power involves duties. If the consciousness of this ambivalence of power were really general, the craving for it would in many cases be less intense. The man who envies his neighbour's power as a rule only has eyes for the rights which it confers, and the wielders of power themselves are also in many cases blind to everything but their rights.

Fitness confers the right to govern, but a government can only maintain itself if it performs its duties. It never fails to insist on its rights, but it usually forgets its duties in the course of time. The multitude which overturns this government is, however, also actuated by the desire to possess itself of rights, not to perform duties. At the bottom of its heart it shrinks from responsibility and invariably unloads it on to the shoulders of an aristocracy. We should thus be faced with a perpetual, heart-wasting circle, if we were bound to suppose that things will go on in this way for ever, but the case is not quite so simple as that.

The exercise of power strengthens the sense of responsibility, so that in the end the ruling class—which includes, as we have seen, an ever-growing proportion of the population—develops more and more sense of responsibility as it goes on.

That is what makes all discussion of the question when a nation is ripe for "freedom" (i.e., for rights and responsibilities) so fruitless. The aristocrat maintains that the classes which have so far been excluded from a share in the government of the country are unripe for it, and he is invariably right. The democrat insists that they are

ripe, in which he is mistaken. A nation, like an individual, can only become ripe for freedom by having it, only develop its sense of responsibility by having responsibilities to bear. The discussion leaves the heart of the matter untouched.

For human nature to become gradually less imperfect, single individuals and classes of society have first to perfect themselves. (It is our misfortune that our historical knowledge only goes back such a short way.) A class which has ruled for a long time has more sense of duty than one which has only just seized the reins of power—that is the meaning of the motto *Noblesse oblige*. No amount of exceptions can make any difference to this fact. A man who comes from a family that has been accustomed to governing for many generations is better qualified for the job than a parvenu, assuming their intellectual qualities to be equal. One has only to think of political families like the Cecils in England, who have produced a constant succession of great statesmen from the age of Elizabeth down to our own day (Salisbury, Balfour, Robert Cecil). It is absurd to deny the influence of tradition and breeding, but it is equally absurd to suppose that at any particular moment the list of the competent is closed.

The man who insists equally on his rights and his duties is the “gentleman”. The type is produced in a family whose members have been enabled by favourable external circumstances to be top dogs in their immediate circle. That is to say, it implies ancestors, but anybody can become an ancestor.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The fact that this type is commonest among the nobility is due to the latter's close connection with land owning, which ensures continuity in mode of life through successive generations, whereas other forms of wealth seldom last for more than a generation or two. This is very clearly exemplified by the English “gentry”—not a nobility in the continental sense, since it has no distinctive title—the class of landowners living in the country. This class has for centuries provided the country with the majority of its leaders, and

Thus, in the course of time, a great aristocracy grows up which recognises both rights and duties, and the real argument for the necessity of progressive democracy is the necessity of educating the masses up to a sense of duty, of responsibility for their acts—in a word, to the development of their individuality.

That is the task of all education. The people has often been compared to a child. On the strength of this the opponents of democracy, acting on a perfectly sincere conviction, would deprive them of both rights and responsibilities. But the comparison needs to be followed out further. The child does not remain a child for ever, it grows. The development from absolutism to democracy has its parallel in the relations of parents and children, father and son. The paternal authority, which assumes all rights and duties, is justifiable and necessary as long as the child remains a child. It is always exceedingly difficult to determine the right moment for the child to assume its own rights and responsibilities, and it seldom takes place without a struggle. As a rule the youth merely sees that he is being refused his rights (however ready he may be to perform his duties, that is not the chief motive of which he is conscious), while his father considers that it is his duty, in view of his greater experience, to maintain his responsibility and his authority.

If, then, we realise that a conflict is almost unavoidable even in the case of a relationship founded on the deepest affection, it becomes obvious that such a conflict must be absolutely inevitable in political life. It is a superficial

not political leaders only, and it is a sound instinct that urges the English parvenu to become a landowner himself as quickly as possible, just as it is proof of the sound sense of the English race that it incorporates these parvenus in the gentry instead of rejecting them, and thus makes friends of them. In this way the old aristocracy has retained its vitality and not become isolated, indeed, English society has for centuries provided an example of an evolution rational and therefore averse from violent changes.

judgment which lays the whole blame for the historical struggle between aristocracy and democracy, which we can attribute to no theoretical incompatibility, on the egoism, the insistence on their rights, of both parties. The cause of it is the difference in age between the classes.

The clearest and most beautiful exposition of the notion of paternal authority and its rights and duties in relation to the child is to be found in the *Laws of Manu*<sup>1</sup>

The highest in the land, the real rulers, are the wise men, the Brahmins (priests, scholars and poets). They own no property (as the tribe of Levi received no territory), are dependent on public charity and are masters in the true sense of the word, supreme authority is vested in them. Next to them comes the warrior caste, from which the king (*primus inter pares*) is drawn and which is charged with the duty of defence. Below it come the farmers and traders, the richest class, which pays the taxes, and last of all the great mass of workers who have no rights *but also no duties*. On the contrary, it is the duty of all the other classes to feed them, care for them and treat them well.

It is an ideal system, because it lays stress on the duties which properly belong to every station in life and every age, and absolves the child from duty, in practice, it has led to intolerable tyranny. Whether this is due to wrong interpretation or fundamental defectiveness it is impossible to say, but it takes no account whatever of growth—a fault which is to some extent inherent in all law. In practice these castes became permanent institutions, it was impossible for a man to raise himself from one to another, and his caste was determined once and for all by birth.

<sup>1</sup> Manu is the legendary father of mankind in the Indian Veda and, according to the tradition, the author of the book of laws that bears his name. The book only exists in a comparatively recent recension the authority of which is, of course, strongly contested. It may be compared with the Mosaic laws, in so far as these are not of a definitely religious nature.



Hence the system became the incarnation of injustice, of the "caste spirit". It is an ideal example of the aristocratic principle, and at the same time shows how that principle may become a caricature of itself.

The aristocratic principle, as we have now interpreted it, is the only practical one, because it is the one that suits the actual structure of human society as it has been so far. It is based on inequality, on the "difference in age" between people.

But it is only by recognising that this difference is not invariable but continually shrinking as the world grows older that the aristocrat can remain true to himself.

The democrat for his part is justified in demanding liberty, equality and fraternity for all, only he must recognise that liberty means voluntary obedience, equality equality of duties as well as of rights, and brotherhood the fulfilment of a wish and not something imposed by force.

These are the inexorable demands of the "democratic spirit" which are wrongly believed to be opposed to the aristocratic. There is only one principle of *government* and that is the aristocratic. There is only one way of remaining faithful to it, and that is to follow the path that leads to the democratic ideal. Life is movement, life is growth, and hence an inequality that is never the same for two minutes. We believe that it is progressing towards an eventual equality and unity. This unity is the ideal which lies behind the catch-word "democracy". Once it was attained, government of any sort would be superfluous and impossible; unity, in putting an end to all strife, would put an end to what we mean by life.

Since this goal nevertheless answers to the deepest aspirations of all life, it is impossible to regard this life as its own final cause.

## 6.—PROGRESS AND REACTION

IN the language of politics the opposite of reaction is progress, but its logical opposite is action or doing.

That in itself shows the twist which politics give to this general term, action is in itself a step forward, reaction a step back.

No account is here taken of the point from which or the goal towards which this forward (or backward) movement is made. It is, of course, possible to move in opposite directions from any point, and it depends on one's judgment of values which direction one calls "forward", but if I do not know my objective, I cannot tell whether my departure from a given point is bringing me nearer to it or taking me further away from it. Both sides must, therefore, believe that they know their objective.

Reaction in politics means a return to the past.

But that is an ideal which is only called reaction by its opponents, its supporters call it conservatism and say it "makes for stability". Its object must, therefore, be to keep things as they are.

The object of action is change, which its opponents consider subversive, while its supporters regard it as a means to improvement. Reaction, as an absolute ideal, means standing still, no matter where, action, as an absolute ideal, moving forwards, no matter whither, both are absurd like everything else that sets up as absolute in a relative world.

The conservative ideal would only be justifiable if the world were perfect, but nobody, not even the Conservative, believes it to be that. Hence he is not really a Conservative but, since he too is a man of action, a reactionary.

He believes that the world is getting worse; his ideal lies in the past—at the point where he would like to remain fixed.

The progressive, on the other hand, believes that the world is getting better and wishes to hasten the process by action, his ideal, the goal to which he aspires, lies in the future.

Reaction is thus the natural ideal of those classes of society (or individuals) whose great days lie behind them and who consequently can see only decline before them, the oldest, uppermost classes of society who stand to gain nothing from the future, only to lose, i.e., the nobility, the Services, the clergy and the higher bureaucracy.

Progressive ideals appeal to the classes who look forward to having their innings, their good time, in the future—the bourgeoisie and the working classes.<sup>1</sup>

But now, is this progressive ideal really synonymous with human progress, reaction with human retrogression? The question is superfluous for anyone who does not believe in the progress of the human race. Many people do, in fact, deny it—Schopenhauer, for instance, based his whole system on this denial, and cast doubts on the value of life altogether, which did not, however, prevent him from husbanding his own life with the greatest possible care and the most ruthless egotism—but life is only conceivable as movement, i.e., progress in some direction or other, even if it is only a circular one; to stand still is death.

Since, however, everybody instinctively believes in life and acts accordingly, everybody also believes in progress.

In that case, the ideal of progress coincides with the

<sup>1</sup> In so far as the bourgeoisie, which is a vague concept, already enjoys a measure of power, it is on the way to becoming reactionary, e.g., the big industrialists and merchants. Reactionary ideals are a logical consequence of power and wealth.

ideal of human life; what meaning can one then attach to a reactionary ideal?

It would only be reactionary, i e., contrary to evolution, if evolution moved forward in a straight line.

Goethe declared that evolution went in spirals, i e., in alternately rising and falling lines which, however, represent an upward movement taken as a whole. Reaction is as much a factor in progress as action. They limit each other, provoke each other and are parts of the same movement. Human progress results from the alternation of action and reaction. All action is at the same time reaction, all reaction action.

True human progress is furthered at one moment by action ("progress" in the political sense), at the next by reaction (Conservatism). The excesses and blunders of the party in power at the moment provoke the reaction against it.

Human beings and the human race only learn by the mistakes they make and then correct, the errors of one party aid the growth of the other which takes its place. The two great political parties are profoundly symbolical, every country has them and they are no products of chance.

Arising seemingly out of different historical causes everywhere, they represent, also only seemingly, the opposing material interests of different classes, in reality they embody two eternal human tendencies, on the alternating action of which human progress is built.

This mutual limitation, and the ambivalence of all movements, is exemplified in history.

The evolution of European civilisation is based on the contest between ancient civilisation and Christianity.

On its first appearance Christianity represented "progress", it destroyed slavery, finally broke up the Roman Empire and reached its zenith in the Gothic Middle Ages

But then the rôles were reversed: the Renaissance, which was hailed as the last word in progress, brought with it a return to the classical spirit, it fought against the Christian spirit, which it regarded as "reactionary", with another reaction in the shape of a reassertion of earlier ideals. Amid the plaudits of humanity it restored the classical ideal to supremacy, but in a short time that ideal was once more dethroned by the next step in human progress, namely, the Reformation, which was a second victory for the Christian spirit over the classical.

THIS is no tale told by an idiot, however, true progress does go forward, using first one instrument then the other, until the time comes for the synthesis of both.

Europe is seeking this synthesis and it will not be possible to talk of a European civilisation till it is found.

The greatest of the Germans, Goethe, tried to find such a synthesis, and his struggle for it is clearly mirrored in both parts of *Faust*, but the solution escaped him. Euphorion, the child of *Faust* and Helen, falls and is dashed to pieces in his upward flight.<sup>1</sup>

In the gigantic struggles and upheavals of the moment our age is battling for this synthesis, striving to attain this harmony. Contemporaneously with the desire for a politically united Europe—I deliberately pass over the fact that Europe can no longer be considered apart from the rest of the world—and the Roman ideal, which, after being embodied in the various imperialisms (the cause of all the trouble), is now incarnated in the idea of the League of Nations, we have going on before our eyes a great social revolution which is seeking, under its economic guise, to realise the Christian ideal of the brotherhood of man. And while the West is preserving and guarding the

<sup>1</sup> It is not merely the synthesis of the Teutonic and the Hellenic that Goethe was seeking, but that of the Gothic, i.e., Christian Europe as a whole, with the antique, it just happens that Christian Gothic found its most typical expression in the Teutonic countries.

classical tradition, the legacy of Athens and the Renaissance (the special task of France), the old Asiatic ideals are reviving in a new form in the East. Their wild, turbulent, half-barbaric character (such the Romans already called it) appears in the art of a Dostoevsky or a Tolstoy; the Russian Revolution shows them translated into material terms.

Through strife and struggle, movements and counter-movements, the various ideals are ploughing their way towards a synthesis, but here, too, we find the struggle between progress and reaction. The main outlines of the situation are now emerging from the mists of the war which long obscured them. There is a struggle going on between the great classical tradition, which is at this moment synonymous with the reactionary, backward-looking ideal, and the spirit of Asia, with which it has already once tried in vain to blend, in the Church. Mid-way between the two combatants, both geographically and spiritually, lies Germany, and it is there that the synthesis, of which the greatest German seers, like Goethe and Nietzsche, dreamed, should properly take place.

This truth is, however, obscured by the political catch-words of reaction and progress—this and a great deal more besides, not only the ideals involved in the great struggles of history, but those which compete against each other in every individual and every succeeding generation.

Every man has his progressive period and his reactionary period. He is progressive in youth, because he sees happiness and the prime of life before him, because he is still waiting for his flowering-time to bear fruit, in the sere and yellow leaf, when he sees his hey-day behind him, he is reactionary.

Every generation fashions its ideal out of the experience which that hey-day brought it, hence the ideal of

the sons is not the ideal of their fathers but the reaction against it, which in its turn involves new action. But grandparents and grandchildren understand one another, thus the present generation feels a spiritual kinship with the generation of 1848, which was merely unintelligible and "outworn" to the generation of yesterday. In the last years of his life Goethe saw the generation which despised his classical *Iphigene* turn back to *Werther* and the *Sturm und Drang* period. The explanation is that his life spanned three generations. Each succeeding generation thinks that its own ideal represents the only possible line of advance, because it feels itself, quite truly, the vehicle of progress, and therefore can only regard the opposing ideal as retrogressive and obsolete.

It is the business of youth to attack the *status quo* and the business of age to maintain and defend it. If it were possible for age to achieve a complete victory, progress, and life itself, would be at an end, if it were possible for youth, it would mean the beginning of a new, entirely contingent and chaotic world (which, however, begins nowhere but in the mind of youth), actually, neither wins outright, the victory remains with evolution. What is valuable in the old survives, for nothing can be destroyed unless it is already dead. Youth makes the necessary elbow-room for itself to grow in, and it is reserved for later generations to realise that all these trees that are fighting among each other for sun and air-space form a unity, are a wood in fact.

To ask, therefore, whether progress represents the truth, or even whether it comes nearer to it than reaction, is equivalent to asking whether youth or age is to be preferred.

Deep down in all of us there is sympathy with youth, because we all love our own youth best, but one must

learn to realise that the youth of today is the age of tomorrow and the age of today the youth of the day after.

Nations and classes of society also have their ages, which are determined by their history, and their ideals vary accordingly. In my opinion it is not racial differences but differences in age that are ultimately responsible for the divergence in national ideals, and not economic inequalities but differences in age again that are at the bottom of class-strife

Classes and nations have the defects and the qualities of their age. Nations with an old civilisation, and ancient (and, therefore, high) social classes have the advantage of experience and tradition. They have discipline, the repose and good taste that go with breeding, and an established and highly developed social code, which only a superficial view will dismiss as a superficial and unimportant adjunct. They are the finished article, the perfectly developed, ripe fruit

The young nations and the lower classes have originality and initiative. Theirs is the spirit of enterprise, the creative enthusiasm, the passion and the generosity. They are the thing in process of becoming, the blossom

As well as the virtues, nations and classes also have the vices of their age, the "defects of their qualities" as the saying is, and when attention is exclusively directed to these, as it usually is in the struggles of nations and parties, the result is a caricature.

When that happens, people see nothing in the old countries and the upper classes but blind tradition-worship and belief in authority, hatred of everything new, persecution of all who differ from them in opinion or faith, intolerance and arrogance in every form—the rotten fruit, in fact, in the young they see nothing but licence



and destructiveness, selfish ambition and will o' the wisp enthusiasms, lack of character and consistency—in short, barbarism and immaturity.

Thus each generation—and the same applies to nations—*will always see only the good points in what they regard as progress, as the ideal, and only the bad, exaggerated to the point of caricature, in the programme of their opponents; at the same time each will regard its own ideal as the absolute truth and every other one as a lie.*

Looked at from a higher point of view, youth and age are equally good, equally in the right, equally valuable at any time, and the same applies to the progressive and conservative ideals, we human beings, however, will always award the palm to the ideal which represented progress to our generation, the ideal which caught our youth, no matter whether it is in fact “reactionary” or “progressive”. (In order to avoid confusion I pass over the fact that the ideal of the coming generation always has its champions in the preceding one, who form the left wing opposition, “the opposition that is always right”. The rigid distinction between generations is, after all, merely a methodological convenience.) Only those who stand outside the spiral can always recognise it as such—even Goethe regarded the Romantic Movement as an absolute step backwards. The one thing that stands outside and above it, above life, is what believers call the hereafter, or God, and the knowledge of that only comes with death. But every man alive is prejudiced in favour of his own time of life and his own generation, for he is part of that movement which preserves life and develops it.



## PART II

### *ANTITHESSES IN THE LIFE OF ART*



## I.—IMPRESSIONISM AND EXPRESSIONISM

THE antithesis between Expressionism, in which—so they say—the spirit of our revolutionary age finds utterance, and Impressionism, which it has supplanted and overcome, is apparently clear, simple and absolute. The Impressionist starts from external appearance, which gives him the impression, and in seeking to reproduce this impression makes a copy of Nature. The Expressionist despises this external appearance, his work is the externalisation of the feelings which well up from the inmost depths of his soul, it is not Nature but his own soul to which he wants to give plastic expression.

The above account of the matter is clear, simple, and wrong, like all theories based on absolute antitheses. In this context it should be remembered that all æsthetic theories, considered by themselves, are unsatisfactory, because the essential thing about art, which is the personal element, can only be fitted into a theory by Procrustean methods, (being a part of life itself).

“Art” is a concept, but we only know it by its works. Impressionism and Expressionism are concepts, but there are no works of art corresponding to them completely, because a work of art is a slice of life, not of theory.

The view that Impressionism and Expressionism are opposite ends of the pole is, however, in my opinion, not only unsatisfactory in the general way that all theories as such are, but definitely and most emphatically wrong.

In discussing this subject I shall take painting as my starting-point, because it is in painting that the contrast

between the two tendencies is most sharply defined, and from there that it was carried over to the other arts.

The Impressionist theory of art was formulated by Zola, who was the friend and champion of the group of painters which gathered round Manet and subsequently became known to fame as the Impressionists, thus "A work of art is a portion of Nature seen through a temperament". Zola's original phrase was *un coin de création, vu à travers un tempérament*; it was only later that he substituted *nature* for *création*, no doubt the earlier version seemed to him to savour too much of religious belief but this one little word "nature" has been responsible for innumerable confusions. It is the point from which the enemies of Impressionism start when they call the latter imitation of Nature, omitting all mention of the "temperament". The Impressionist contemplates a section of creation through his "temperament", his soul, and thus produces a new piece of "creation", under the direct stimulus of Nature. The Expressionist, on the other hand, (according to his own theory) sets to work quite independently of Nature. The stimulus comes from inside himself, from his "temperament", and the result is a new creation, independent of Nature.

The important thing is that in both cases the work of art is a new creation. Mere imitation of Nature is neither art nor creation; it is, in fact, not possible at all, or at the most by mechanical means. It has, of course, not the smallest connection with the work of a Manet or a Claude Monet. Even if one were prepared obediently to swallow the thesis of the Expressionists and admit their independence of Nature, the definition of Impressionism which we owe to its disciple would in any case be fundamentally wrong. The essential thing about every work of art is the personal temperament of the artist, his manner of expressing it is of secondary importance.

The definition of Expressionism is, however, equally wrong, as it is based on the false assumption that the artist's inmost soul is something independent and outside of creation—the fatal effect of the word “nature” in the definition here becomes apparent. The artist's soul is not independent of creation and not of “Nature” either, for it is precisely the feeling that the self is not cut off from the external world but that both are parts of a single creation, that is the foundation of that sympathy with the not-self which makes a man an artist. The Expressionist is just as dependent on the created world as the Impressionist, they are both parts of it. But the mechanism of their psyches works differently, even if there is no fundamental difference between them the Expressionist works from memory,<sup>1</sup> the Impressionist from immediate impression.

The Impressionist gets his stimulus from Nature, but Nature can only stimulate him in so far as she is akin to his temperament. This natural impression he transforms until it corresponds perfectly to his emotion.

The Expressionist seeks utterance for the half-realised emotions which some impression has awakened. He finds it in form and colour, and his constructions in form and colour approximate in greater or less degree to natural objects.

If the Impressionist reproduced any chance impression without moulding it to his temperament he would not be

<sup>1</sup> “Memory” must be understood in its widest sense, what that means is only just being revealed by the most recent psychological research. The major portion of all memories is unconscious. Not only do they reach back to earliest childhood, but one can speak without hesitation of hereditary and even pre-human memories. All these unconscious memories are liable to be awakened by some momentary impression or other. The fact that these primitive, unconscious memories are common to all human beings is largely responsible for the effect that works of art have and the mysterious feelings which they awaken in people—music, for example. It is precisely these common memories which make it possible for an artist who works from his inner consciousness to be all the more generally intelligible for that. The explanation is that art is based on the deepest, i.e., the most primitive and elementary instincts.

an artist at all but a recording machine; if the Expressionist kept the expression of his feeling purely abstract, without making use of the forms and colours of Nature, it would be impossible for him to say anything at all.

Both of them would find themselves beyond the limits of art, in the domain of mechanics. But the truth of art is a *via media*, it is the perfect harmonisation of the artist's own temperament and the world outside him, and from this *via media* the consistent Impressionist and the consistent Expressionist would be equally far removed.

But every artist is at once an Impressionist and an Expressionist, that is to say, he transforms the impressions he receives into a new expression. The only question is whether he works up his impressions more or less before reproducing them, whether he creates more through impulse or more through reflection. That is a difference, but not an antithesis.

Every work of art takes its rise from a feeling that is struggling for expression, but the expressive possibilities of the fine arts are strictly limited, lying as they do between the imitation of the external surface of Nature in all its contingency at one end and the reduction of the living material to a regular rhythm at the other.

Both these extremes lie outside the domain of feeling and therefore of art, the former belongs to mechanics (colour-photography and photographic sculpture), the latter to geometry, the elements to which it finally works down being the straight line and the segment of the circle, plus the primary colours.

Both are impersonal, whereas art is the expression of personality. In proportion as the artist's temperament is impulsive, governed by pure instinct, he is dependent on chance, on the movement of the moment, on impression, the more he is given to pondering and reflection, the more abstract and formal his work will be. But since the



impression which the artist receives from "Nature" is a personal one, he can never become a mere copyist—that is, if he has personality.

As a matter of fact, the reflective artist, who searches for the fundamental laws of creation (which coincide to some extent with the laws of growth and motion, these being the rhythmic laws) comes nearer to imitation of Nature, for he tries to create after her manner—his aim is not the subjective rendering of Nature but the objective act of natural creation

The impulsive artist is primarily a colourist, his work has movement; the reflective artist is more of a draughtsman, he excels in form and his work is relatively static. The great artist displays a harmonious synthesis of both tendencies.<sup>1</sup>

Impressionism is impulsive and instinctive, it is careless of form, gets as near as it can to the fleeting upper surface of Nature and relies largely on colour. (Once more let me repeat that these theories never really apply to the actual artist. Manet himself exemplifies the happiest synthesis of form and colour, and indeed the whole greatness of French art is based on this happy relation between reflection and instinct)

Expressionism, as contrasted with Impressionism, ought, according to its theory, to be reflective, enamoured of law, formally perfect, geometrical and colourless!

Is it really a product of reflection instead of the unadulterated expression of emotion which it purports to be?

That strikes one as a very odd description of Expressionism, but does it not fit Cubism admirably?

Any number of new "movements" in painting have sprung up in the past few years, each with its firmly

<sup>1</sup> The two tendencies correspond to the psychic tendencies known to the psycho-analytical school as Extroversion and Introversion

defined programme—which in itself shows their intellectual origin

Cubism even called itself proudly—and I think justly—the “art of the intellectuals”, but Futurism, Expressionism and all the others also had their cut and dried theories ready to be translated into practice. Only they forgot to reckon with the artists themselves, with the fortunate result that the significant productions of all these movements show very little trace of theory and a great deal of the artists’ personalities. For it was, of course, not the theories that produced the works of art, but *vice versa*.

Cubism deliberately rejects life and seeks by way of geometrical abstractions to get back to the fundamental laws, Futurism, on the other hand, has a perfect passion for life and tries to carry closeness to Nature to its highest possible pitch. They are at the extreme opposite ends of the scale, and the Expressionist theory is a hopeless attempt to inculcate both at once. Futurism is the last off-shoot of Impressionism, Cubism a violent reaction against it

Futurism carried devotion to the external phenomena of life to its ultimate extreme, hence its disciples, quite logically, hated all art (except their own), it was the limit where art ends and life itself begins. It completely disintegrated the form, whereas a work of art is always the formal embodiment of an emotion (the cinema and the revolving stage are closely linked with Futurism). Futurism corresponds perfectly to the final periods of Gothic and Baroque (Rococo), when form and proportion were dissolved in ecstasy. Like them, it brought its own remedy with it, in the very moment of complete dissolution comes the inevitable reaction to sobriety—geometrical, accurately proportioned, constructive and abstract, like the early Renaissance (e.g., the Pitti Palace, begun in 1440), the classicism of the Empire period, and Cubism.

The last few decades have been a period of dissolution and transition in national life, of the break-up of all existing institutions and the transition to new ones, and its art exhibits the same dual nature. Futurism represents the break-up, Cubism the beginning of the new creation, and if we have previously called the Expressionist theory illogical, we must now add that this want of logic is based on a right feeling. The theory is muddled, but the art which it is trying to explain exhibits just this double aspect of dissolution and renewal—is, in fact, the mirror of our age.

Every age faces both backwards and forwards, when the contrast between yesterday and tomorrow is as violent as it is today, it gives rise to an unbalanced and inharmonious art, and thus the art which was introduced to the world under the false label of "Expressionism" is in reality the representative art of our revolutionary age.

There is one thing, however, that must not be forgotten and in these days it is frequently overlooked that art holds the mirror up to the age is only a half truth. The business of art is something much more essential than that—after all, the age would be exactly the same even without such a "mirror". Great men are in advance of their time—that is what makes them great. The great artists are not reflectors of their times, but prophets of the time to come. Art does not so much reflect the present (it usually leaves that to the lesser talents, the ephemera) as create the future.<sup>1</sup>

Great artists are revolutionaries at a time when the masses still have many years of contented acquiescence

<sup>1</sup> That is the reason why the great artist is seldom if ever understood by his contemporaries. Depressing as that would be if one ascribed it to an eternal inability in the human race to understand greatness, it becomes intelligible and inevitable when one bears in mind the function of genius in building up the future.

before them, but once the revolution has materialised, art turns back to the ideal of law and order, the classical ideal.

Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Strindberg, Cézanne, Van Gogh—all the great revolutionaries, in fact—lived in the bourgeois age, but they made the revolution which they anticipated. The revolution and the new order which follows it always begin inside the brains of a few great seers and great artists.

The great artists are not mirrors of their times but telescopes through which the future may be discerned.

The work of the really great men is at once destructive and constructive, they say what they have to say, and then theory comes along and systematises it. But by the time that theory has become common property it has ceased to have any meaning for the creative artists themselves.

While Time is translating the ideas of the great men of yesterday—none of whom are there to see—into fact, the great men of today are already forging the ideals of tomorrow, in opposition to the spirit of the hour.

A revolutionary age lives its life at a great pace, as the most violent upheavals last the shortest time. Neither in art nor in life can revolution last long, it immediately stretches out its hands for the new order, for the destructive portion of its work is merely the preparation for new creation, just as the storms of autumn strip the trees bare in order that the new life may unfold itself in the spring.

Revolutions always end in a new order, and artistic revolutions, which spring from an overplus of emotion, end in a more rational type of art. The great artists of the eighteenth century were revolutionaries, those of the Revolution were rational or "classical", the great men of the Impressionist period were revolutionaries, the art of today, which determines the character of tomorrow, is reflective and constructive.

Hence, when I consider Expressionism, all its ecstatic, over-emotional and feverish manifestations seem to me to belong to the sterile and played-out spirit of yesterday. It is in what I have called the geometrical tendency, in the aspirations of Cubism, the urge towards simplification and monumentality, that I see the beginnings of the future. Expressionism thus seems to me to be at once the continuation of Impressionism and its triumphant negation.

There is one thing that I should like to add. I believe not only that every age has its own characteristic language which is recognisable in every branch of art, but that for each particular age one form of art is more characteristic than the rest. As regards the fine arts, one period will do its best work in painting, another in sculpture or architecture. The great artistic ages, which produce first-rate work in all departments, coincide with times of spiritual equilibrium. Europe has only had two such—the age of Greece and the Renaissance, our two great classical, i.e., balanced, ages, all the rest have achieved more in particular fields but less all round. In the same way a completely all-round man will do well in everything but break no records in any one particular department.

A period will produce its best work in this or that field according to where its strong and weak points lie. If its strong point is painting, its sculpture, architecture and literature will also be primarily pictorial, as the art of yesterday, of the Impressionist age, was. An art whose ideal is to get as near as possible to life and movement will be at its best in painting, it will impose a pictorial character on sculpture and produce a pictorial—in other words, essentially unarchitectural—architecture, similarly in literature the novel and the lyric will come more naturally to it than the drama or the epic, because colour and

unfettered movement appeal to it more strongly than form and rhythm.

When in due course the reaction comes, all the elements which had taken a back seat come to the front again and are treated as new discoveries. The new age will be at its best in those branches of art in which form, rhythm and construction are the decisive factors. Hence the new art will choose for its medium first of all architecture and secondly, a sculpture that is ancillary to architecture, in painting it will give form—the architectural and monumental element—precedence over colour, while its literature will neglect the novel and the lyric in favour of the drama.

The strife of opposing movements has shown itself in its most violent form in the sphere of painting, because painting was the characteristic art of yesterday, but the victory of the new age, which is anti-pictorial in spirit, will make itself least felt there. Painting may still seem to be a long way from the classical tradition (the whole business of easel-pictures is alien to the nature of that tradition, the proper sphere of classical painting is the fresco, which is ancillary to architecture, and in so far as fresco-painting survived at all in the Impressionist period, e.g., in the work of Puvis de Chavannes, it was classical); but architecture has already returned to it. In sculpture also an archaic-classical spirit (Maillol) now prevails, indeed the essence of the whole movement is a return not so much to Greek art at its height as to archaic art, to form, rhythm and monumentality in their simplest and most naked forms.

The age is looking for a new style, i.e., a firm architectural platform on which the other arts shall take their stand, and circumstances have so willed it, in this world where everything is linked together, that architecture should have great tasks awaiting it in the immediate

future, whereas sculpture and, still more, painting are doomed to take more and more of a back seat as "luxury arts". Sculpture will cease to be an affair of statues and portrait busts and live on primarily as a constituent part of architecture, it has never done anything but lose by departing from its architectural basis. Painting will exhibit itself in the fresco (as far as it gets the chance) rather than the easel-picture, and in any case will be at a disadvantage as compared with drawing and the graphic arts generally.

This tendency was already perceptible before the upheavals of the past ten years, interest had already turned to architecture, the applied and graphic arts and the drama, and it is there that the beginnings of a new style showed themselves. The newly awakened enthusiasm for dancing also points in the same direction—an age which re-discovered rhythm was bound to restore the art of dancing to an honourable position. In its search for rhythm and abstraction art went back to the beginnings, preferring the primitively geometrical in all departments and neglecting the arts that had been evolved later in order to devote itself to the earlier ones. The dance is, in my opinion, with song, undoubtedly the oldest form of artistic activity, consequently I look upon the craze for dancing as a return (of which frequenters of *thés dansants* are certainly not conscious) to the beginnings of art. The "dance-mania" is the first completely genuine artistic enthusiasm, independent of any culture-snobbery, that the world has seen for many years.

Dancing, simple music without orchestral elaborations, classical architecture, architectural sculpture and a formal, linear sort of painting—such is going to be the art of the immediate future.

At least, that is what I discern behind the mask of Expressionism. At the same time I do not believe that

we shall see a simple repetition of antique, Renaissance or Empire art, because the contemporary problem extends beyond European issues. Our age is looking for something more than a European harmony: the next classical period will be based on the spiritual equilibrium of Europe and Asia. It will be—after a preliminary period the length of which it is impossible to estimate—the first great age of world art.



## 2 —CLASSICAL AND ROMANTIC ART

WHEN one talks of classical and romantic art, one thinks first of all of the classicism of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century and the reaction which followed it. Classical art means the return to the antique, romantic the return to mediæval chivalry, both point back to the past. In a wider sense, however, the former signifies a comparatively intellectual, matter-of-fact, balanced sort of art, the latter a more emotional, vaguely imaginative and unrealistic sort.

We are concerned here with two views of art (and therefore life) which are independent of time and firmly ingrained in human nature. One thinks of the ancient world and the Middle Ages because these two periods produced the works which are most representative of the two tendencies, and, so to speak, fixed the ideal and the type of each. The classical and romantic ideals existed before as well as after the Græco-Roman world and the Middle Ages, they are eternal elements in human nature, the Græco-Roman world and the Middle Ages merely represent to us the most characteristic and perfect realisation of them in the history of European art so far.

Art is based on the interaction of reason and feeling. Just as feeling precedes (and will succeed) the development of reason in the order of evolution, so the evolution of art proceeds from the purely emotional primitive stage to the rational. Feeling is instinctive, it blots out distinctions and seeks the universal. Primitive emotion longs

for the ~~past~~, for the universal unity which preceded individuality. Reason is individualistic and discriminative, and hence aims at law, measure, and the ordering of separate phenomena. Reason ranks above primitive "retrospective" feeling, which we call instinct, but below "prospective" feeling or intuition.

The development of art thus proceeds from primitive emotion to reason and thence to intuition. That is its main line of advance, but every artist, and every period, contains a mixture of the three elements. According as one or the other preponderates we may speak of instinctive, rational or intuitive art. In this sense we may call romantic art instinctive and classical art rational.

All art is based on instinct, it is in virtue of this basis, which is common to all men in all ages, that it is able to appeal to everybody's deepest and most unconscious feelings. At the same time, the transformation of instinct into reason goes steadily on, and when a thing has once been rationalised it can no longer be felt emotionally but only conceived rationally. Hence the importance of symbolism in art. Man sets up a sign or symbol to stand for what he feels but does not understand; once he has understood it and penetrated to its heart, the symbol ceases to exist. An age for which thunder is an unintelligible phenomenon takes it for the direct intervention of a super-human being, and its art expresses this by the symbol of a Thunder-God, an age for which it is a natural—i. e., intelligible—phenomenon, is no longer able to give it symbolic expression in its art. That is to say, it has ceased to belong to the sphere of art and become a part of science.

Nietzsche sometimes thought that the development of science had made art altogether superfluous. Though not the expressed opinion, that was the inner conviction of the whole "scientific era" as regards art, the result being that art came to be looked upon as a mere luxury, an occupa-

tion for people with nothing more important to do—and really became so.

“Every work of art must be symbolical, i.e., point beyond itself”, said Goethe. If everything were intelligible to reason, if there were an end to all mysteries and all symbols, there would be an end to art too. Since, however, feeling outruns reason, Man is always discovering new riddles which Science is not yet able to solve, and hence art survives and goes on creating new symbols. We are on the threshold of an epoch which sees new riddles everywhere and whose art is looking for the new symbols. The whole era which started with the Renaissance and ended with the close of the nineteenth century was a period of steady growth, interrupted by short periods of reaction, for reason at the expense of feeling, and consequently a period of artistic decadence, apart from the most rational branches of art, such as the novel.

All emotional reactions against the supremacy of reason are akin to each other and all are “romantic”. The first and, so far, the greatest was Gothic (it makes no difference whether one calls all romantic art Gothic or all art akin to Gothic romantic), next came the Renaissance, then Baroque (which was romantic), then classicism, and then the Romantic movement proper. But ever since the Renaissance the reactions towards feeling which interrupted the victorious advance of reason have grown smaller and smaller and less and less effective, because the growth of feeling has failed to keep pace with that of reason.

The Gothic period was the last one in which feeling was confident of its superiority, the last “age of faith”, because its feeling still looked forward and surpassed its reason. The later Romantic reactions no longer had the strength to impose themselves. Baroque was the expression of the emotional reaction against Protestantism (the connection

between Baroque art and the Jesuits is no accident), it only established itself in Catholic countries, hence the non-existence of English Baroque, for example, only half Europe still believed.

The Romantic movement of the early nineteenth century was a reaction against eighteenth century rationalism,<sup>1</sup> which had found its material expression in the French Revolution. In comparison with its predecessors, it remained ineffectual—it failed to create a new style and invented no symbols of its own. The age wanted to believe once more, but could not manage it, that is why the Romantic movement turned back to the past. It—and still more its successor of later days which deliberately called itself Symbolism—was compelled to go back to something more primitive, it was retrospective. It addressed itself to all the infantile elements in Man, that is to say, to everything that remained over from the childhood of the individual or the human race, and tried to awaken it to new life. It loved the Middle Ages with their knights and churches and Crusades, and the fairy-tale with its princes and enchanted princesses, its witches and sorcerers. Fantastic unreality and grotesque horror are the marks of Romantic art.

The child in man has a power of imagination which invests life, to which he is still a stranger, with a fantastic beauty and on the other hand inspires him with fear of its unknown aspects. The genuine fairy-tale tells of heroes,

<sup>1</sup> For the sake of clearness one is forced to simplify. In so doing one represents phenomena which were really simultaneous as successive. The reaction against rationalism began during its supremacy, not after it.

It is already apparent in the antithesis of Voltaire and Rousseau, in art it was known as the *Sturm und Drang* period, and its typical and greatest work is *Werther*. Rationalism, however, victoriously retained its supremacy. In the Revolution the spirit of Voltaire, the practical politician, triumphed over the spirit of Rousseau, the sentimental enthusiast for Nature. In art classicism reigned supreme, and it was not till the Romantics that the spirit of *Sturm und Drang* came into its own. It was only then that Goethe's *Werther* exerted its full influence—an example of the way in which the greatest minds see things coming long before they materialise.

but of monsters too; it arouses joyful surprise, but also makes you shudder, and constantly goes from one extreme to the other—in short, it is deliberately irrational and absurd. Hence romanticism knows nothing of proportion: its cathedrals reach up to heaven, every sort of emotion bursts forth in excess. The romantic world seethes with giants and dwarfs, sinister mountain gorges and gloomy clouds pierced by a brilliant shaft of light. Only the remote and extraordinary is romantic—prehistoric times, the Middle Ages, primitive barbarism, the East, the desert or the storm-tossed ocean, heroes and martyrs, royal children, mariners—any time but the present, anybody but ordinary humanity.

Everybody in whom the springs of imagination are not absolutely dried up has something of the child in him; hence everybody loves a fairy-tale, occasionally and for a short time, but it remains a fairy-tale for him, he does not confuse it with life—in a word, he does not *believe* in it.

Even a small child wants to know whether the fairy-tale is really “true”, and once it has discovered that it is “only a fairy-tale”, its fairy-tale days are over. Only in later life do we read the fairy tales of our childhood over again, with a mixture of sentiment and irony.

In its own day romanticism was a joyous childhood memory, the fairy-tale art of an age which despaired, not without good reason, of the present, but instead of foreshadowing the ideal of the future, as really great art does, it looked for the ideal in the past—in fact, it was a very beautiful, very pious fraud.

We have defined classicism as rationalism in art, but that is a somewhat ruthless simplification.

For a movement is a movement, not a fixed state, and language can only express fixed states. Feeling

predominates in romantic art, reason in classical, yet a purely rational art is an impossibility. In the classical art with which we have been chiefly concerned, namely, the classicism of the eighteenth century, reason did play a very large part indeed, it is a thoroughly self-conscious art.

In turning back to the antique, classicism acted perfectly deliberately; not sentimentally, like the romantic mediævalists, but because they believed that the artist needed to go to school with the ancients once more. It was thought that a renaissance of ancient art could be brought about by taking measurements of buildings and of human features as represented in sculpture and by following the Greek rules of the drama. What had been true in Athens, must be true everywhere and for all time. A Doric or Ionic temple was the only possible architectural ideal for Munich or Edinburgh too, sculpture could not portray a Napoleon otherwise than as a Roman Emperor; and in painting, where the Greeks were only known at second-hand, the Renaissance, and especially Raphael, was the eternal model. People imagined that everything could be reduced to laws and proportions, they believed in an absolute norm in art and saw in the rediscovered laws of the ancients a key to the one and only true and absolute art. The result was an excessively unimaginative and impersonal kind of art, whose sole virtue was that it stuck to the rules, in feeling, and therefore personality, it was wholly deficient.

Such was classicism, but such were not the great artists of the time, even when they professed allegiance to this theory, and emphatically not the ancients.

The thing about ancient art that defies imitation to this day and remains eternally admirable is its just balance of reason and feeling. This just balance is the ideal towards

which all art aspires, and no age has come so near to perfect balance—at least in Europe—as that of the Greeks. The true classical art, to which Europe has so often yearned to return, succeeded in reconciling the discordant forces within the human spirit. For a certain period an entire, if small, nation overcame that discord. Athens discovered the secret of reconciling reason and feeling, and therewith of reconciling the self and the universe.

Art has ever since been homesick for this period as for a lost Paradise, but it has never succeeded in recapturing its spirit, however conscientiously it copied its forms and rules. Because the human race is always growing, it must always remain a vain ambition to recall a past stage in its existence.

And then it would be a mistake—the mistake which classicism made—to suppose that no progress has been, or conceivably could be, made since ancient times. A harmony such as was vouchsafed to Antiquity has not been repeated, but both the components of that harmony have developed. There is profounder and more powerful emotion in the Gothic than in the ancient world, and acuter reasoning-power in our own, it is only the just balance of the two that has not yet been recaptured. For several hundreds of years intellect has been developing at the expense of emotion, and a new turn of the wheel will have to raise emotion to the level of intellect before a new harmony, higher than that of the ancient world, becomes possible.

Mankind yearns for the harmony and repose of the ancients as for the happiness of childhood, but once childhood has passed, its happiness can never be recaptured. The emotion of the youth is too profound, the practised reason of the man too acute, to permit of the half-unconscious bliss of those early years.

Classicism, like romanticism, tried in vain to conjure up a vanished age, it was a conscious effort to go back to

the past, as romanticism was an instinctive urge. Romanticism missed its mark because reason—or, if one prefers it, knowledge—had developed too far since the Middle Ages, classicism missed its, because emotion—or, if one prefers it, suffering—had sounded new depths since ancient times

The ancient world did not return, yet the attempts to revive it were not fruitless. The antique spirit was originally confined to one country, only a pale reflection reached its neighbours, and the rest was barbarism. The Renaissance brought classical art, even if it was a watered-down, second-hand classical art, to Western and Central Europe, while the classicism of the eighteenth century conquered all Europe, penetrating deep into Russia and the far north. The same is true of Gothic, Baroque and romanticism, only in this case the Christian ideal (which first reached its full development in European art, in Gothic) spread from the north all over Europe.

Here we see the contest between the classical and the Christian spirit, on which we consider the whole development of Europe to be based, in the field of art. The synthesis of the two, when it comes, will usher in the classical period of the future, the next era of harmony.

No sooner had ancient civilisation passed its zenith than reason began to preponderate in Greek art. Rome and the later heirs of Antiquity, the Latin races, preserved and developed the rational tradition of law and proportion. It was reserved for the North, for the Germanic and Celtic, also the Slav, races, to give feeling its due weight in art. This led in all European countries (it must be remembered that the populations of all of them are exceedingly mongrel) to the struggle and interplay of the two tendencies.

The past few centuries have seen the victory of the Latin idea over the Nordic, which failed to produce any effective



counterblast to the Renaissance; it is only just recently that an extremely powerful emotional art, much of it derived from still unexhausted "barbarous" Russia, has made its appearance—a sign that the process of bringing feeling up to the same pitch as reason has begun.

Emotional art goes with youth and "barbarism", intellectual art with age and over-civilisation, classical art is maturity.

Romanticism is marked by the defects and the qualities of youth, and because it is a late youth, the defects predominate. It resembles an over-stimulated, over-emotional, dissatisfied, morbidly sensitive youth—who is hence one of its favourite types. It shares his emotional outbursts and longing for death, his (in spite of everything) fundamentally honest pose of despair, his morbidity and hysteria. But it is also capable of displaying the headlong fire, the passion and enthusiasm of youth.

Classicism has the characteristics of old age. It resembles a rather weary, blasé and highly cultured man of forty, whose ideal is a just proportion of pleasure and repose (the latter predominating), who finds anything loud, brightly coloured or fantastic disturbing, and would confine even love and hate within the limits of a slightly pedantic good taste.

The Romantic is a beautiful, pale, enthusiastic youth, in caricature he becomes a semi-hysterical, underfed and ineffectual "æsthete" of doubtful cleanliness and indubitable vanity. The Classic is a perfect society man, a collector and connoisseur, an exceedingly charming man of the world with excellent taste. The caricature of him is the outwardly correct but otherwise completely prosaic and unimaginative, colourless "gentleman", the average business man.

If romanticism is the spring, though often a rainy spring,

classicism is the autumn, often a beautiful, still sunny autumn. But genuine classical art is high summer, maturity, perfection endlessly prolonged, in which time seems to stand still.

A process similar to the sequence of the seasons takes place in the life of the individual and may be seen most clearly in the works of an artist.

Artists have their romantic youth and their rational, retrospective old age, they also have—sometimes, and for all too short a time—their classical moment, their harmony. That is the instant when feeling and reason are reconciled, when idea and form correspond perfectly. The greatest artists reveal the most perfect and the most enduring harmony, hence they are quite rightly called classics. Europe has only had one truly classical period, namely antiquity, but truly classical art has reappeared with every great master, however far removed from antiquity he may have been. There are, of course, some very great artists who are at the same time inharmonious—these are the “Gothic” artists (e.g., El Greco or Dostoevsky), in whom emotion predominates, others who are richer in intellect than emotion, and whose strong point is, consequently, form (e.g., Raphael, Racine or Anatole France)—these may be called “classical” in the narrower sense of the word. But these terms cease to have any meaning as applied to the really great masters, who are at once romantic or “Gothic” and classical, or rather, neither one nor the other, for the simple reason that they have created a higher harmony out of the synthesis of both. The work of men like Shakespeare, Beethoven, Leonardo and Michelangelo sets the standard for a future in which such art will have ceased to be an exceptional phenomenon, individual and isolated, and our greatest European geniuses will be merely *primi inter pares*.

True romanticism and true classical art are prophetic and create the future. The era which raises our feeling to the level of our reason and makes it ripen into intuition will express itself in romanticism, and a truly classical art will then bring about a synthesis of the two.

### 3.—THE ASIATIC AND THE EUROPEAN SPIRIT IN ART

I PROPOSE to discuss not the actual productions of Asiatic and European art but their underlying principles, the essential features of each as I see them, where they differ and where they resemble each other.

It is generally supposed that art is essentially the same in all ages and all nations, that there is but one Art. Works of art are either good or bad, people say, thereby implying the existence of an absolute, fixed and eternal artistic ideal. The truth is, however, that this ideal changes with nearly every generation, one despising what the other most admired.

When Napoleon commissioned a temple of Fame (the Madeleine), he wrote that he wanted nothing in the way of a church, for in that line the Panthéon and *even* Notre-Dame would be difficult to surpass—an æsthetic judgment that this age must find surprising.

The Napoleonic age was the last to possess an artistic style of its own—"Empire" or classicism. Style is the expression of a faith, a conviction, and is therefore inconsistent with an impartial attitude to other faiths. The nineteenth century had no faith and no style and hence appreciated all art—or at least so it was thought, but until recently this appreciation was confined to European art, indeed no other was believed to exist.

The age prided itself on its catholicity, but the absolute superiority of Europe was an article of faith and the starting-point of every æsthetic judgment. The Greeks were invariably, and rightly, regarded as marking the highest point reached by European art, everything that

came before was looked upon as primitive and archaic, a preparation for the Greeks, everything that followed as more or less decadent. People also loved Gothic art, but failed to arrive at any critical attitude towards it, nevertheless, they were conscious of the fundamental difference between it and ancient art, so they had recourse to racial characters and simply labelled it "Germanic". Baroque was looked upon as decadent, extra-European art as primitive or exotic—not art at all, strictly speaking, though the charm of Asiatic *objets d'art* was recognised.

This was largely due to the fact that Asiatic art was still very little known. It was the excavations and researches in Babylonia, Assyria, Egypt and, quite recently, Crete that first opened Europe's eyes to the greatness of the ancient architecture and sculpture of the East and the derivative character of Greek art. Later still came the discovery of Japanese art—the colour-prints first, which had such a powerful influence on Impressionism, while Indo-Persian art and Chinese art, the greatest of them all, were actually only discovered quite a short time ago.

The effect of all this on European views of art has been so great that one can speak without exaggeration of a transvaluation of all values, and æsthetic theory has also begun during the last few years to look for a new basis, a vantage-point from which European art, classical and Gothic alike, and oriental art may be surveyed and judged together.

Most writers on art have been dominated by the feeling that Asiatic art was akin to Gothic, both being opposed to the antique, beyond that, however, when they tried to come to grips with the nature of this kinship and this opposition, they arrived at different conclusions and failed to produce a convincing explanation.

Worringer, for instance, attempts to explain the difference as one between "abstraction", based on fear of the

external world, and "empathy" based on love of it. However, finding abstraction insufficient to account for such a heterogeneous art as that of the primitives, the East, and the Middle Ages, he speaks of different sorts of abstraction—the abstraction of the primitive, which is based on fear, that of the Oriental which is above knowledge, and the hybrid, unsuccessful abstraction of Gothic. He ends by calling abstract art monotheistic and "empathetic" art polytheistic. Worringer is an exceedingly stimulating writer but he gets tied up in contradictions, e.g., on his theory the Buddhist art of China would be abstract and monotheistic. For abstraction and empathy the Dutchman, J. Havelaar, substitutes symbolism and realism. Symbolism seems to me more to the point than abstraction, realism on the other hand, owing to the ambiguity of the word, a bad exchange for empathy.

Both "abstraction" and "empathy" seem to me absolutely necessary to the creation of any work of art. Empathy (i.e., objectivised self-pleasure in and through the work of art) is present even when that work springs from a feeling of fear, for "feeling" may mean fear as well as love, but in either case the feeling that it excites is "pleasure" the work of art is always a "wish-fulfilment"

Abstraction is a necessary condition of all art, and of visual art in particular, for without it the chaos of feeling cannot conceivably become form. In the narrower sense, of course, "abstraction" must be understood in a linear and geometrical way, but it is then only a mode of expression—and, by the way, not at all the one employed by the most important Asiatic art, in its wider sense abstraction is the reduction of the complicated to the more simple, of the fortuitous to the regular, the giving of form to the formless—in short, the most essential and indispensable foundation of all artistic creation

Without empathy there would be no artistic impulse prompting to creation, without abstraction no possibility of satisfying that impulse.

Perhaps we shall reach a more satisfactory solution of the problem if, instead of separating art from the totality of Man's spiritual and mental activities, we regard it as part of it

From the very moment of birth the individual and the human race are equally under the necessity of coming to terms with their environment. The self has to compound with the not-self, to try and achieve a harmony.

All spiritual and mental activity springs and develops from this necessity (this applies to the pre-human stages of evolution too, of course), instinct, reason or intelligence, and intuition we call the (as we suppose) successively developed components of the human soul, and they all, in their different ways, fulfil the same function. It is, of course, impossible to speak of any one of these components as having enjoyed exclusive supremacy at any moment in the short span of human history, for the human spirit only exists as a combination of the three, with this reservation, however, it is possible to pick out periods, as also nations and individuals, in which one or the other component predominates. Thus we may say that in primitive times instinct predominates, and that with the development of intelligence it gradually gives place to intuition.

This line of development may be traced in art no less than in other spheres of activity of the human spirit, an instinctive art would thus be appropriate to a primitive epoch (or nation or individual), a rational art to a more advanced one, and an intuitional art—standing above reason, as Worringer puts it—to the most highly developed.

It must, however, be borne in mind, that art is only one

of the things that are intended to interpret the world to questing humanity Art is an emotional interpretation of the universe; it springs from, and is addressed to, the feelings, and is, therefore, in intimate association with religion, the most important spiritual activity of an epoch in which feeling, whether instinctive or intuitive, is in the ascendant. But in such epochs only Should reason, on the contrary, predominate, science will take precedence over art, and at such times art will be debarred from fulfilling its real function and will become a more or less superfluous, if charming, hobby

That was exactly the position of art in Europe during the scientific age.

As long as Man feels the mystery of the universe he will try to get nearer to it through symbols, and with such symbols art provides him, but once he has understood, or rather, thinks he has understood, the universe with the help of natural science, there is an end to symbolism

The business of a symbol is to stand for something one feels but does not understand, one does not symbolise "laws of nature", chemical or physical processes Hence in a rational age art is not symbolic and thereby ceases to occupy any sort of leading position

Such a process of development has only occurred once in history and then only in Europe The development of the natural sciences from the Renaissance down to the end of the nineteenth century gave European man a new and completely materialistic outlook on life. For as long, and in so far, as he remained satisfied with this interpretation, art could be nothing more to him than an amusement. The character of modern European art is based on the predominance of this spirit, it is, apart from passing reactions and isolated individuals, an art of the physical world, a materialist art

This materialistic interpretation of life, which is the



gift of rationalism, is at the bottom of the profound difference which divides modern European art from all Asiatic art and equally from Gothic art, which was moulded by Christian, i.e., Asiatic, influences.

The moment art ceases to be symbolic—that is, to create works that *mean* something, there is only one thing left for it, and that is to imitate the external aspect, now no longer mysterious, of Nature.

This progress towards imitation of Nature, which is the path that European art has followed, reached its zenith in Naturalism.

Naturalism appeared in its purest form in literature (the most intellectual of the arts), in the drama and the novel, and particularly in the countries where the triumph of the scientific spirit was most complete—namely, France and Germany.

We all remember the time when it completely dominated the stage. For instance, where the action of the play took place by night, in order to secure the maximum of verisimilitude the stage was so dark that one could see nothing, the actors spoke—often in an unintelligible dialect—hardly louder than in real life and not seldom with their backs to the audience. Scenery and costumes were exactly copied from reality or, whenever possible, the “real thing.” To be perfectly consistent the fourth wall ought to have been added to the rooms—the naturalistic play almost invariably takes place indoors. That would have made the imitation of reality perfect—and put an end to all possibility of a dramatic art.

Art which seeks the truth in reality ceases in the end to be art and becomes reality itself.

This deliberately extreme example is intended to illustrate what the purely European contribution to art is, and how far art can become rationalistic without ceasing altogether to be art.

To sum up: during the age of Naturalism, at the end of the nineteenth century, there existed a purely European art, which may be contrasted as something totally different in kind ~~with~~ Asiatic art. Asiatic art looks for truth in a spiritual world, European in the material world. To the Asiatic the material world is the appearance which obscures reality, he knows that reason is the architect of this appearance and that feeling comes to a knowledge of reality by way of art. Matter is for him entirely a product of reason. To the European, the material world is reality, because he believes in reason, feeling is illusion, "imagination", matter is primary and spirit a secretion of certain glands. Herein lies the fundamental and most profound contrast between Asia and Europe, between the materialistic art of an age dominated by reason and the idealistic art of an age of emotion.<sup>1</sup>

We must remind ourselves that this contrast was only a temporary one. The development of reason and the building up of science—or rather, of the exact, the natural, sciences—has been almost wholly confined to the Europe of the last few centuries. In the animal kingdom one species may develop a particular accomplishment to a very high pitch without entirely losing all the rest, e.g., the swimming of the fish, the flying of the bird and the walking of the mammal (not forgetting the intermediate forms), and all these faculties find a new synthesis in Man. The same law seems to hold good inside the human family, it is in this way that it advances spiritually, and physically too. The development of reason has been the business of European man in the last few centuries, as learning to get about on dry land was of the mammals, and just as they had to give up their mastery of the air in

<sup>1</sup> The true function of reason in artistic creation is, as I have explained elsewhere, not to copy natural phenomena but to get at the law which lies behind them.

order to possess the dry land, so has European man—and with him, art—forgotten how to soar.

As Man represents a synthesis of the animal kingdom, a synthesis which unites all the faculties at the price of being inferior to some species of animal or other in respect of each one of them, so will the man of the future, the "Superman" be a synthesis of the various species of man<sup>1</sup>

The European synthesis is the task of the immediate future, but side by side with it the Eurasian synthesis, which includes it, and in which America is destined to play a leading part,<sup>2</sup> is progressing towards realisation

Asia is in process of absorbing the best features of European rationalism, while Europe is yielding more and more to the emotional power of Asia.

It seems as if Asia, in a sort of semi-slumber, had preserved the treasures of emotion in her art till the moment arrived for her to communicate them to Europe. Out of this double process of education—the awakening of reason and science in Asia, and of feeling, and thereby of art once more, in Europe—the new humanity will arise and with it the new art of emotion, which will be the true "intuitional" art.

<sup>1</sup> That is no doubt the purpose of all the catastrophes and upheavals by which the nations are at this moment being convulsed, physically and spiritually. Born of hate, they are furthering the cause of union, the hatred between races and between classes was never so bitter, but they have never bestowed so much attention on their "enemies", never got to know them at such close range. How many millions of men have got to know foreign countries, races and languages! And the incredible blending of races brought about by the war will bear eloquent testimony, in the next generation, to the fact that in many cases they have got to love them too. People have learnt that they are all very much of a muchness everywhere, that the points of similarity between races are very many and the points of difference very few, on the other hand, they have monstrously exaggerated the differences between the classes, but even that struggle is of necessity leading to mutual knowledge—"capital" is intensely preoccupied with the proletariat as never before—and thereby to reconciliation.

<sup>2</sup> The remaining portion of the human race—the Negro race—is at the moment still too backward, but in this case the task of intermediary will no doubt fall to America, in virtue of her negro population.

## II

In order to realise what it is that Europe still needs before it can attain to this intuitional art, one needs to study the great art of Asia. If rationalist Europe in the past despised feeling, that is because the only feeling it knew was infra-rational, because European emotional art was an art of the instincts and the offspring of fear. The art of super-rational emotion has only manifested itself in Europe in isolated masterpieces. One of the results of the development of individualism is that, as the general artistic and emotional level falls, isolated individuals tower above it in solitary grandeur. The East knows nothing of such pre-eminent artists, and would regard them as deserving of pity in their splendid isolation, from them we can judge on what plane the intuitional art of the future will be. On the other hand, should one desire to give a picture of Asiatic art, there are no names of artists at one's disposal—just as time has allowed the names of the great painters who worked at Chartres and the great sculptors who worked at Rheims to fall into oblivion. We do not know who the sculptor of the Sphinx was or who carved the Assyrian and Babylonian friezes, and even with the much later art of China it is hard to attribute any work to a definite artist with certainty. These things are the creation of the national feeling, the expression of the general level of feeling. Much less is heard in the East of the supreme value of the individual, to an Asiatic the notion of an "original" artist is meaningless.

Hence the fundamental difference in the training of the artist. One extreme we saw exhibited in modern Europe, where the artist despises all tradition and regards all schooling as an unwarrantable check on his individuality, where each man carefully preserves and cultivates that in him which makes him different from his fellows,

and knows but one wish—to be individual. The other extreme is exemplified for us in Chinese painting, where every method of representation, every natural form, is laid down once ~~and~~ for all. The young artist learns painting like an alphabet. There is an absolutely fixed method of representing clouds, rocks, water, dress and even the human face. The more perfectly the artist has mastered them, the more *un*individual he is, the more he counts. These two extremes, like every caricature, reveal the characteristic features. Europe's objective has been the great individual, Asia's the highest general level, consequently, the art of post-Renaissance Europe can only be studied in the works of the great masters (what would Dutch art be without Rembrandt and Franz Hals, German without Durer and Holbein, English literature without Shakespeare, music without Bach, Mozart and Beethoven? Nothing but a lifeless trunk). But one can acquire an understanding of Asiatic art from looking at the first anonymous work of art, or even of applied art—an early Chinese vase, for instance—that comes one's way.

Whistler once remarked that a Japanese paints a sprig of blossom, and it is the whole spring, a European paints a vast spring landscape with a whole forest of trees in flower, and it is not worth a single blossom. The contrast could not be expressed more subtly, there the two things are, the Asiatic and the European (Whistler was referring to the art of the 'eighties). The Japanese paints the spirit of spring, expressing it symbolically by means of the sprig of blossom, the European copies the physical fact, and because the spirit—in which, of course, he does not believe—is not there, his work remains devoid of feeling and dead.

The Buddhist art of China and Japan is the best introduction to intuitional art. The cradle of Buddhism

is India, and the roots of intuitional art are to be found in Indian metaphysics. The penetrating genius of Tagore has seen that the fundamental difference between Indian and Greek civilisation goes back to their respective origins. Greek civilisation is a product of the town, it "has a cradle of bricks and mortar", Indian civilisation comes from the primeval forests in which the Aryan invaders settled. It has remained in constant touch with Nature, with the world of beasts and plants. Here, at the very outset, the lines of development diverge. Greece followed up the principle of differentiation, fostering the growth of individualism and the intellect. She isolated Man from the rest of creation (which he can only understand when it is endowed with a human soul—hence the Fauns, Dryads, Nymphs etc.), saw him as the measure of all things, and the consistent development of this spirit led to science, which subsequently created the ideal of Man as the master of a subjugated, hostile Nature.

India began with universalism and has remained faithful to it. No development beyond universalism is conceivable, understanding of the universe becomes more profound, that is all. A naive pantheism gives place to an intellectualised one, the Vedas are succeeded by the Upanishads. It is a development from primitive to developed emotion, from instinct to intuition. Feeling alone tells India that the external world is a deceptive appearance, *māya*, a fact which European metaphysics discovered thousands of years later through Kant, and European science only in the twentieth century through rational channels. Feeling the unity of Man and the world as she does, India sees the ideal in complete unity or harmony and recognises the self as the obstacle in the way of this. Since, however, she believes in the spiritual not the sensible world, she seeks an inner harmony. India does not want to make Man lord over a hostile Nature,

but to let the individual soul be merged in the universal soul.

Such is the spirit of India, and it is to be seen at its purest and highest in the Buddhist art of China and Japan.<sup>1</sup> The Buddhist art of China is based not on any specifically Buddhistic ideal but on the common ideal of India, i.e., harmony with the spirit of the universe, and this is the object of Chinese painting and sculpture, as it is the fundamental idea of the Chinese mystic, Lao-tse.

This art is completely "empathetic", but in the highest sense of the word—it seeks projection not into the material world, not into *māya*, but into the universal spirit, into *Brahman*. It seeks harmony, *Tao*, in the cosmic spirit. The sensible world is to it merely the embodiment of the super-sensible, hence its effect is invariably mystical and it never ceases to be symbolic.

It is no longer the primitive symbolism of cosmic fear, which created fabulous beings, but the symbolism which springs from intuition, from the knowledge that "the things that must pass are only symbols", in the words of the *Chorus Mysticus*.

It is, therefore, perfectly indifferent to this art what objects it represents, indeed, it prefers the commonest and humblest ones. After all, everybody has a sense of grandeur and eternity in the presence of the greatest things. The Himalayas or the ocean or the colossal in art are certain of their effect everywhere and at all times. Primitive emotion expresses its cosmic fear in the gigantic symbolic figures of the Assyrian Cherubim, in the Sphinx

<sup>1</sup> In India itself Buddhism was not artistically creative, for it was an intellectualist reaction against Brahminism, a sort of Indian Protestantism, it was, however, responsible for the introduction into China of earlier Indian ideas also. Its destiny is a peculiar one. In India itself it soon died out, but it conquered Tibet, China and Japan. But this conquest was achieved at the expense of its own character, and the thing it was instrumental in spreading was exactly the thing it had fought against in India. The Protestant missionary succeeded in converting half mankind to Catholicism.

and the Pyramids, intuition has fathomed reality and overcome the sensible world, therefore, for it, everything is a symbol. It has felt the unity and omnipresence of the spirit, and sees it in everything equally. Every natural form is an envelope through which the Spirit shines, and it makes no difference to it whether it is representing a bamboo stalk or the Buddha, for both are symbols of the one Spirit having equal value in its eyes. Thus every work of art is symbolical and points beyond itself, and that is why "the Japanese paints a sprig of blossom, and it is the whole spring".

Thus we see that in the last analysis the difference between the Asiatic and the European artistic ideals goes back to their different faiths. In this sense art is always an expression of "religion". Europe believed in matter, Asia in spirit. European art has denied the spirit, but since all art, and indeed all human endeavour, invariably seeks unity, it has tried to achieve projection into the external world, union with reality. But art is spirit manifesting itself in matter, and spirit can only unite with spirit, when it tries to become absorbed in the sensible world it perishes in the attempt.

This explains the moribund condition of European art at the turn of the century. There can never have been an age in which art played such a small, such an unworthy, part. In Asia art was the concern of the whole nation, the artist being only distinguished from the rest of society by his greater creative gifts. That, and not any particular "gift of craftsmanship", explains why every article of common use was a work of art among these people, it was impossible for even the humblest artisan to produce a meaningless thing. Dress, crockery, every house and all its contents bore witness to artistic feeling, but on festive occasions they unrolled a picture and hung it on the wall.



(what an exquisite appreciation, that refuses to blunt its pleasure by constantly living with a work of art!), put a vase filled with flowers that harmonised with the picture in front of it, and invited their friends to share the feast. Everyday life was permeated by art, but the highest art was for high days and holy days.

In the "scientific era" art had disappeared from the life of the people. Hordes of tastelessly dressed people—and worst of all when they had got themselves up for a great occasion—lived in grotesquely hideous tenement-houses, their furniture, their crockery and everything that surrounded them was in its shape, colour and quality one long sin against the Holy Ghost of art. The rich were "art-lovers"—that is to say, they went to a celebrated artist for their pictures just as they went to a celebrated shoemaker for their shoes. They could even afford to pay someone to supply them with the taste and "artistic sense" which they themselves lacked, the things with which they surrounded themselves were not merely expensive but often beautiful too—only in those cases the setting was all wrong. The few sincere lovers of art, for their part, became "æsthetes"—that is to say, they turned their backs on life and created an artistic illusion for themselves, being unable to find any artistic truth anywhere<sup>1</sup>. All the arts split up into two divisions, art for the masses and art for the initiated. The masses went to the light operas (the days of light opera as a work of art were over), while the élite listened to music the enjoyment of which presupposed an education of the rational faculties. The masses decorated their homes with oleographs and sham stained glass, the élite "collected" Italian primitives or eighteenth-century Englishmen and hung them in picture

<sup>1</sup> This is also the foundation of antique-collecting, which comes, in so far as it is not a mere matter of fashion, from despair of one's own epoch.

galleries. The masses read Nick Carter or the illustrated papers, the élite *éditeurs de luxe* of this or that "decadent" writer.

Meanwhile the artist, whom a psychology in keeping with the age had exposed as something halfway between a criminal and a lunatic, was conscious of standing entirely outside the life of his time. His reaction to this depended on his character. The majority, under the stress of necessity, asked pardon of society for having been born different from it and made haste to bow the knee to the bad taste of the day. Those artists who could not bring themselves to surrender to the enemy in this fashion withdrew from life and preached the doctrine of Art for Art's sake, or became revolutionaries from sheer disgust. All the great artists of this period belong to one or the other of these categories.

The revolutionaries prepared the way for the great change, the return to Spirit. Externally speaking, it was the world war, hunger and revolution that brought about the collapse of "European civilisation", but these are merely the external consequences of the inner transformation which was first accomplished in the minds of a few thinkers. It was Ruskin and William Morris, Nietzsche, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and Strindberg who sounded the death-knell of rationalism and are the spiritual fathers of the revolution. With the death of "European" art, art is waking to new life in Europe.

The art of Europe is today no longer what I mean by "European art", and the art of Asia has ceased to be what I mean by "Asiatic art" for centuries. Europe has drawn nearer to Eastern idealism, and Asia, especially the far East, has been influenced by European materialism. Thus the time is drawing near when both will recognise their kinship and coalesce to produce a new and higher art. The

necessary condition is that they should have the same faith and seek the same truth

Everything points to the fact that this faith is in the process of being born. It has been said that the content of all religions is the same, and that is true, in so far as the foundation of all religions is the conviction that the world is the creation of Mind. Much as the symbols in which the religions embody this Mind may vary in kind—and they are as various as the nations and times from which they spring—the fundamental notion behind all religions, all metaphysics and all art remains one and the same.

The only exception to this is the scientific era, which attempted to explain mind as a product of matter. Nothing was recognised as science except exact science, i.e., science which deals with things that can be measured, and mind is not one of these. Matter can be measured, but not mind, the static, but not movement and eternal change. In the scientific age people measured everything and thought they knew everything, they reduced life to its simplest phenomena, only to find themselves once more confronted by a riddle. Exact science failed to produce an answer to the question of the origin of life, and people began to talk of the "bankruptcy of science".

At this point a host of discoveries and new ideas burst in upon every department of science, with the result that "exact science" has had the ground, i.e., matter, cut away from under its feet. In our own day it is science that has recognised its faith as a superstition and is struggling towards a new one. The reality which we thought we knew has turned out to be an illusion. Where the former generation of savants thought that it had deciphered the "eternal laws of nature", the present one admits that it deals only in theories and probabilities, there is only one thing of which it is certain and that is that the vision of the world which human reason takes for reality is not

reality and not truth. All our reason and our senses know is an indeterminable fraction of reality, what lies above and below that fraction does not act on the senses and reason takes no cognisance of it. What used to be called matter, solid and measurable, is merely the effect of hidden forces, and what are these forces but the intangible somewhat to which the name Mind has been given?

Thus twentieth-century science confirms the basic doctrine of all religions and restores Mind to its rightful position.

The newest European theories and the doctrines of the oldest Indian metaphysics are as like as two peas, what intuition divined long ago reason is now confirming.

That is what its long and exact labours have accomplished.

The "scientific era" was the age of unbelief, the religions had been exposed as falsifications of natural history, and the contemporary thinker had to choose between unbelief and superstition. Yet there was no lack of voices crying out that life was not only meaningless but intolerable without faith. One party wished to restore the old religions to power, which was an impossibility, the other to found new religions. But once the development of reason and science has taken place, no religion is thinkable which contradicts science. The conflict admitted of no solution till science itself recognised its limitations, outside of which the field remains open for faith.

Feeling divines and believes in things which reason has ceased, or not yet begun, to understand, and art represents them in symbols, for which reason art is religion. Reason is concerned with effects, feeling with causes. It is the function of science to push these causes further and further back, by discovering that what we took for a cause is really an effect; it is not by denying the super-sensible but by

investigating it that science lifts it out of the emotional sphere into the rational. The attitude of science to faith, of reason to feeling, should be that of a guide (in both the forward and the backward directions), not of an enemy. Then we shall realise that there is nothing super-sensible that *contradicts* reason, but also nothing so simple that it presents no puzzle to reason.

Feeling, faith (which may very well take the form of doubt), and therewith art, would thus be restored to their proper places, being recognised for what they are—namely, the highest expression that Man has found for his profoundest experience, for life itself.

European missionaries have always been puzzled by the fact that the Chinese nation has no “real religion”. All that means is that it has found expression in the symbols of art for its belief in the Spirit and needs no other form of worship, and that it has dispensed with all rationalisation of its motives—with dogma, that is

Other religions have not yet dispensed with dogma. Though they are familiar with all the resources of art and make use of them in their worship (e.g., the Catholic Church), they nevertheless hold fast to an oral or written tradition, to a definite system addressed to the reason

That is why none of them can be the “coming religion”, since reason has outgrown their systems. The more rationalistic the religion, the less can it hope to be the religion of the future.

There will be no religions in the future, only faith, religion—that is to say, the finding of reasons for this faith—will then really be a “private affair”. The faith will be faith in one Spirit as the cause of all phenomena, and the worship in which this faith manifests itself will be art.

It is this faith which I have described as the spirit of Asia in art, and on which the art of the future will be based. Europe has strayed from it, but is about to return. The moment that people once more realise that it is all to do with appearance, the profounder knowledge of natural phenomena which has come with the European development of reason will lead to a deeper understanding and at the same time to a greater amazement. The European once more sees the marvellousness of things, as the primitive and the Asiatic do, and he sees it in a profounder way. Art sees miracles everywhere and is itself a miracle.

The new science of Europe will awaken Asia from its slumbers, for this science is akin to the Asiatic spirit and will liberate the forces of emotion, there no less than here, which will create the art of the future. And this art will have for its basis not the European or the Asiatic spirit but the Spirit that remains one and the same at all times and in all places, even though it may at various times and in various places be misunderstood, distorted or denied.

Individualism and universalism, Monotheism and Pantheism are all one and the same, there is but one Spirit and it is everywhere, it is immanent and it is transcendent, and in art it smiles at all these intellectual definitions, as the statues of Buddha smile.

#### 4—ART AND NATURE

MOST people, if they were asked whether they knew what is art and what is Nature, would, I imagine, unhesitatingly answer "Yes", and to the further question, whether art and Nature might not be mistaken for one another, would reply that that was only conceivable where art had imitated Nature with peculiar skill. Art is regarded as in some sense the antithesis of Nature, when, however, art imitates her the antithesis becomes less sharp and may even disappear almost completely.

But as soon as one tries to define art and Nature the difficulties begin. By "Nature" people mean the external world (of this more anon), by "art" the work of men's hands, a rose is Nature, a painting of a rose is art, or rather, a work of art. Actually, Nature is contrasted with the work of art. But what is a work of art?

A work of art is a human creation and thereby distinguished from Nature, which is a creation of the spirit, for the idealist, or something self-created, for the materialist—in any case not a work of men's hands.

That is to say, a work of art is something created by human agency, but every human creation is not a work of art. One might be tempted to believe that a work of art is something which imitates and masquerades as Nature, and in fact this doctrine has actually had its prophets and its believers. On a superficial view it may appear capable of explaining the meaning of a painting or a piece of sculpture, but it must be obvious at once that this explanation is totally inadequate in the case of

music, poetry and architecture. Nobody can regard a Mass of Bach, the *Odyssey* or the Minster of Strassburg as imitations of Nature, and yet nobody would dispute their right to be called works of art. Imitation of Nature is definitely not the essence of a work of art.

A pair of boots (in ordinary parlance) is not a work of art, a vase may have something of a work of art in it, a statue is a work of art. It was Oscar Wilde who said "All art is perfectly useless". This paradox contains a great truth—namely, that art begins where the useful, as *reason* understands it, leaves off. Boots are useful, a vase may be useful but is at the same time an ornament, a statue is absolutely useless.

Reason is concerned with utility, its creations help it to overcome the resistance of a supposedly hostile Nature. It makes Nature into its slave, whose primary function is to supply it with food and clothing, and it conquers her by means of the machines it has created, which enable it to harness natural forces to its designs.

Reason gives mankind food, clothing and articles of common use, machines to increase efficiency, and machines to make machines. It produces all sorts of highly necessary things, but never a work of art. Because reason only sees the useful in Nature, it can only create what is useful.

The work of art is useless, but that is merely a negative definition. It appears useless to reason and to the rational or "practical" man, but it possesses value for feeling. "Man shall not live by bread alone"—in other words, there are valuable things outside the realm of utility, and that which seems useless to reason is yet not superfluous for human life but valuable, perhaps the most valuable thing of all. The work of art is useless but not valueless.



Nor is it possible to distinguish a work of art from other things by calling it "beautiful". A pair of boots may be beautiful, a vase extremely beautiful

We call an object beautiful when it satisfies our æsthetic sense, and we feel æsthetic satisfaction in the presence of an object that completely expresses its purpose and function. A purely useful article may appeal to a man in this way, in so far as he is sensitive to these things. Even a machine may be beautiful—for instance, an airship, with its torpedo shape which makes one "just feel" it cutting through the air. The more efficient a machine is the more beautiful it is—one has only to think of the earliest motor-cars and then of the models of the present day. This is the technical beauty of shape and proportion which the work of art and the useful article have in common, it is the element in a work of art which is most easily grasped by reason. The more closely a work of art is tied to matter, the greater will be the part played by the technical element in the effect it produces<sup>1</sup>. Architecture is completely tied to it, music the freest from it. With the former the purpose is the most important thing, the latter has no purpose. When a piece of architecture reveals the principle of its organisation at the first glance, when we feel that the beams are carrying the weight and the framework is resting securely, that is enough to satisfy our æsthetic sense. This may take place with the simplest building, and is the fundamental condition of artistic effect.

We must realise clearly that the effect which such objects have on us is in the first place purely physical—

<sup>1</sup> As shape, this is perceived by sight, as weight, by that sense for which we have no proper name and which we call the sense of touch or simply "feeling". One has a feeling of weight and resistance. We have apparently developed no differentiated organ for perceiving this, but the sensations of 'heavy' and 'light', "oppressive", "uplifting", etc., play an extremely important part in our emotional lives, the action of gravity being, in fact, the fundamental condition of our existence.

that is to say, they act on our bodies, setting them in motion. It is not the building that shoots up but the eye which looks upwards and measures the width, we instinctively measure thrust and counter-thrust from our experience, and a feeling of satisfaction is roused in *our* bodies by the correspondence between *our* expenditure of effort and the result. The shapes and proportions which we call beautiful are those which our physical experience leads us to consider well adapted to their purpose. A pillar which is carrying no weight makes us feel as if we were ourselves beating the air, i.e., expending energy uselessly (the same irritation as one feels when one has over-estimated the height of a step), a pillar that is carrying too much weight makes us stoop involuntarily as if the weight were pressing upon us. Thus æsthetic pleasure arises when our sense organs send in a satisfactory report of their work, it arises before the intellect judges, but the intellectual judgment confirms it. The really efficient thing is also "beautiful", i.e., it has emotional value also.

But an object must do more than that if it is to be regarded as a work of art, it must have a higher emotional value. Feeling has a part in all the works of man, even when reason imagines itself in sole control, but art only begins at the point where a surplus of feeling is expressed in the work and awakened in the spectator.

Feeling is a unity which manifests itself as force, it has been called by many names, but it remains inexplicable by reason. Whether one calls it Will with Schopenhauer, *Élan Vital* with Bergson, Vital Force with Shaw or Libido with the Psycho-analysts really makes no difference. All manifestations of life are the expression of this emotional force. In plants and the lower animals the force or amount of feeling is exactly sufficient for

their vital needs, with the higher animals there is already a surplus of feeling. This surplus is turned by evolution to new uses, it is employed for the development of the emotions. The surplus feeling is separated from the sexual instinct and the result is love, maternal love first of all. In this way Man gradually emerges from the animals. Man is an animal with a tremendous surplus of feeling at his disposal, or rather, it is through the growth and sublimation of emotion that the human animal gradually becomes what we now understand by a human being. This surplus of feeling is the source of everything which constitutes humanity and which we divide into various categories with different names. It is the source of the love which, without losing its sexual foundation, is no longer sheer sex—love between husband and wife, parental love, friendship and sympathy. It is also the source of everything we call science (for even reason is derived from feeling), metaphysics, morality, religion or art.

Of these art is the most primitive sublimation of sexuality outside the actual erotic sphere, it is older than science and religion.

Its origin goes back further than the beginnings of the human race—dance, song and colour-ornamentation are found among animals apart from utilitarian ends, in the service of the sexual instinct. Dance and song are the earliest manifestations of art, the visual arts developed out of ornamentation. Ornamentation, the decoration of useful objects, such as weapons, begins the moment people have succeeded in producing them on an efficient pattern. When they have done so, there remains an unsatisfied surplus of emotion which finds its expression in ornamentation.

It would take us too far here to go into the question of what sort this surplus emotion is. Suffice it to say

that it begins by displaying the character of fear. Primitive ornamentation is undoubtedly of the nature of magic, it is intended to ward off the evil spirits (a motive which is still in operation even at the present day), at a later, much later, period the work of art expresses the emotion of love, and each branch of art again exhibits this process of development. After purely geometrical decoration comes the symbolic representation of the spirits in forms which, while still abstract, resemble Nature more closely—plants and animals are now used as decorations and the spirits, who have become gods by this time, are represented as fabulous, semi-human creatures and finally as idealised human beings. Understanding of the world steadily grows, and with it love, till we find the highest works of art expressing perfect understanding and complete emancipation from fear. The surplus emotion is used to symbolise the love of the Cosmic Spirit, called by the deist God, by the Indian *Brahma*, by the Chinese *Tao*, which the human spirit has recognised as the cause of all things.

An object, therefore, becomes a work of art when it gives evidence of a surplus of emotion by its ornamental qualities independently of its practical purpose<sup>1</sup>

A pure work of art is one which serves no practical purpose and is therefore pure decoration, an expression of emotion and nothing else. There are no sharply defined divisions here, one thing shades into another; between the purely useful object and the pure work of art come the applied arts—a glance at Chinese porcelain, for example, will show how very indefinite the boundaries are.

Art is a means whereby Man comes to an understand-

<sup>1</sup> Quite recently there has been a reaction against ornament, owing to the meaninglessness of the soulless ornamentation of the age immediately preceding ours. The search for severely practical lines and materials arose from a right feeling—but it, too, is merely the beginning of a new development.

ing with the external world, with Nature, which inspires him with fear or love, this presupposes a surplus of emotion in Man which expresses itself in this fear or love. The work of art is the visible result, the materialisation of this understanding, it is the emancipation from fear or the fulfilment of love.

A work of art is, then, according to our present definition (provisionally), something different from Nature and cannot be mistaken for Nature, but "work of art" is not synonymous with "artistic *manifestation*" but with "artistic *materialisation*." Dancing is an art, the dance an artistic manifestation, singing is an art, what is the song? The distinctions are already blurred here. A bird sings (the highest compliment a female singer can have is to be compared to a nightingale), is its song a work of art or an artistic manifestation? No, we class the bird's song among natural phenomena. A song of Schubert's, on the other hand, is a work of art, thus the distinction between an artistic manifestation and an artistic materialisation, and even that between art and Nature, disappear almost before they have been drawn. And yet even here the various notions can be more firmly defined. The essential thing in a work of art as opposed to an artistic manifestation is that it is a creation which is separate from its creator and capable of existing independently of him. The song of the nightingale, including the human kind, is a manifestation, the composition is a work of art. The essence of a work of art is not merely that it is a creation, for so is the song of the singer, but that it is a creation which has become independent of its author. A work of art is a spiritual child that has put on a material form, and, like any other child, from the moment of its birth it has a life of its own. From the moment of its birth a work of art is

independent of the artist. Language has no word for the process of creating independent works of art; we ought to distinguish between the creation of works of art and other forms of artistic creation, such a distinction would bring us very much nearer to the essential nature of art.

Art, so we said, is a sublimation of the same emotion that finds an outlet in sex. Just as the instinct of propagation, which looks beyond the individual to eternity, is sublimated out of the sexual instinct, so does the desire for artistic propagation, the desire to immortalise the artistic personality, grow out of the artistic impulse. And as a new life, in the shape of the child, is created in the sexual act through the union of the sexes, so the union of the artist's emotion with the Cosmic Spirit in one or other of its manifestations produces new spiritual life and a spiritual child. Hence we are fully justified in speaking of the conception, gestation and birth of the idea which materialises itself in a work of art. The object of art is to produce new, spiritual beings, which we call works of art. Art is based on love of the Cosmic Spirit, and the work of art is the child which is born from the consummation of this love.

## II

Before we investigate the relation of what we have thus defined as art and the work of art to "Nature", and the real meaning of the latter, I should like to cast a rapid glance at the physical foundations of art. A purely physical explanation can never suffice for anything spiritual, but it is a mistake to leave the physical altogether out of account. Idealism and materialism are only opposed to each other when idealism denies the

bondage to matter under which our world labours and materialism regards the idea as a product of matter.<sup>1</sup>

We have explained that art is based on a surplus of emotion, such as we apparently find, apart from the human species, only in the higher animals, especially the mammals. Even fish, to a superficial view, have no emotions. For materialistic science plants and minerals were in any case without feeling. We are accustomed to speak of emotion only where consciousness is present, and consciousness was in the past only attributed to the higher animals. It has been left to the new psychology from Taine onwards to recognise the fallaciousness of this sharp distinction. This new psychology operates with the concepts of the sub-conscious and the unconscious consciousness—here, too, there is a shortage of words for new notions. It has discovered that there are endless different degrees of consciousness and thus also of emotion. I regard this discovery, especially in the form of psychoanalysis, as the most important one in the intellectual life of Europe since the days of Kant, and I am convinced that it marks the beginning of a new view of the universe. As regards natural science in particular, I believe that the notions of an inorganic mineral kingdom, a vegetable kingdom and an animal kingdom have become impossible, because it is impossible to shut one's eyes to the fact that everything is alive in one and the same way. People have tried to reduce the emotional life of us human beings to physical and chemical stimuli and reactions, but it has now been recognised that even the

<sup>1</sup> It is through the latter one-sided view, which prevailed in the age of materialism, that the world has come to regard science as the negation of art and reason of feeling, whereas true science, like art, is the product of a mixture of reason and feeling. In science the rational approach to the universe predominates, in art the emotional. The absence of any sharp division shows itself in the most rational of the arts, literature. A book which contains nothing but instruction about facts is a work of science, if it has emotional value it is a work of art. History (such as Carlyle's), biography and the essay lie somewhere between the two.

simplest reaction is an expression of emotion. In this sphere European science is on the point of confirming the age-old doctrines of Indian metaphysics, which never ceased to insist on the unity of all living things. For them, everything was a manifestation of a single Spirit, which is imprisoned in matter. It slumbers in the rock, stirs gently in the plant, and, as it gradually awakes, people give the process of its awakening various names, speaking of species of animals and, last of all, of Man.

Life, however, only shows itself in movement, and this movement consists of vibrations. The vibrations of light, or the light-stimulus, produce in physical bodies a reaction whose intensity corresponds to that of the stimulus. Stimulus and reaction manifest themselves in the form of vibrations. We do not say that these vibrations actually are feelings, but that they are their physical foundation. We only speak of feeling in the proper sense of the word when there is consciousness of the sensation, i.e., when the body takes cognisance of what it feels. If, therefore, we only speak of feeling in the case of human beings or at the most of the higher animals, that is because we attribute consciousness only to them. This makes us, on the other hand, too much inclined to forget that even in human beings regular vibrations are at the bottom of all feeling whether active or passive. These vibrations have their tempo, stimulus and reaction proceed at definite intervals, and we feel the reaction as rhythm. This rhythm set up inside our bodies is the basis of our emotions, where it fits in with our internal rhythm (which no doubt manifests itself in our pulse) æsthetic pleasure ensues, and the object, noise or movement seems to us harmonious.

We find rhythm and harmonious form everywhere in Nature. The experiment with sand on a sheet of glass



is well known if the glass is set vibrating rhythmically, e.g., by touching its side with a metal rod, the sand will assume harmonious geometrical shapes. All growth is based on vibration and proceeds in a definite rhythm, and science will come in time to recognise it even where it now sees sheer contingency. India possessed a science of rhythm based on the belief in an all-pervading Spirit and a universal rhythm. It developed a system of breathing exercises the object of which was to eliminate the individual rhythm and so vibrate in time to the universal rhythm. As a result of these exercises the "consciousness of self-identity" disappeared and the person arrived at "knowledge", i.e., ceased to depend on intellectual judgments concerning the reports of his senses and approached pure knowledge, sinking into lethargy and losing consciousness.

This condition is represented as a state of perfect happiness, of absolute harmony, and the state of mind which causes human beings to produce works of art is akin to it. This relation of cause and effect is seen most clearly and obviously in music, which is the most purely emotional and the most direct of the arts (*cf.* the way a child is put to sleep by singing or rhythmical rocking). Where the artistic creation is visibly carried out through the creator's body, as in the dance, the effect is unmistakable. The harmonious rhythm of the work of art invariably produces in the spectator, hearer or reader a harmonious vibration, and therewith the feeling of pleasure. The artist is no doubt specially gifted in the matter of vibrations (the "artistic nerves" we hear so much about), and therein lies his real talent. Up to this point, in my opinion, the production and effect of art must be explicable on purely scientific lines and therefore capable of being learnt, so that an inharmonious work of art, bad art, ought in time to become an

impossibility (the Ostwald colour-album is a step in this direction)

Let it not be supposed that art would be destroyed or even hindered by this science—quite the reverse, the more the conditions governing art are scientifically treated and made intelligible, the better will people recognise what is really valuable and peculiar to art. Colour-photography, photographic sculpture, the pianola and the cinema have shown European man once more what art is not, or at least what is not the essential thing in art. The more science produces harmonious vibrations mechanically, the clearer it will become that they are only the basis of art, not its real essence. Art only begins beyond that point, up to it is the domain of good taste. Still a matter of intuition today, it will be a matter of science tomorrow—just as the keys of a piano if touched correctly are bound to produce the desired concord. People will learn harmony in all the arts as they already can in music, they will no longer talk of a tasteful combination of colours, but of a right or wrong one, movements will be no longer “graceful” but “true”.

### III

What lies beyond all this we can only call the personal element in art. It is the essentially human thing which passes from the soul of the artist into the work of art and thence to other people. It is the artist's personal contribution, not his talent but his humanity. Science may say that association of feelings and association of ideas in the minds of the artist and his public are responsible for this process, that is unquestionably true, but it explains the mechanism and nothing else. What these associations are science cannot tell us, for the simple

reason that they are personal. They are, in fact, what constitutes a man's personality. The actual artistic process takes place in the unconscious, in the regions that lie above and below reason. Threads attach themselves to earlier emotional experiences and tentatively try to weave themselves about the yet unknown. Primitive memories, grimly barbarous or innocently childish, are recalled, intuitions of undiscovered relations and truths not yet born, of a higher beauty, come to life. Art awakens what reason does not yet know or has forgotten.

The artist has a greater overplus of emotion, a greater capacity for vibration, and hence also a better memory for vibrations once felt or only just perceptible, than the rest of mankind. The greater the artist, the more this is so, the greater, more inclusive, more universal an artist's personality is, the more will everybody find something of his own personality in that artist's works.<sup>1</sup>

The deepest desire of the individual is to overcome his individuality by enlarging his personality, / he can only do that by incorporating in himself more and more of what seems to be not-himself. Everything with which emotion feels a kinship is added to the self. The greatness of a personality consists in the amount of its knowledge, and particularly the knowledge it has acquired through the emotions. If the distinction between the individual and the universe were a real one, a work of art would be able to express nothing but the artist's personality, i.e., nothing but what distinguished him from other people, in which case his work would be precluded from producing any effect on other individuals. Nineteenth-century individualism did in fact result in many artists producing works which were, to say the least of it, only intelligible to a very small public, whereas the

<sup>1</sup> Personality must not be confused with individuality, the artist's memories and intuitions transcend his individuality, they are the universal element in his composition. In this personality lies man's highest bliss.

essence of great art is that everybody can understand it and the great artists are the "universal minds"

The greatest works of art have the most commonplace content, they portray things that everybody knows. Modern psychological literature has striven to interpret emotional complications that have never yet occurred—a vain attempt, since the choice is not overwhelmingly large, whereas the masterpieces of literature deal with entirely commonplace and ordinary emotional conflicts which are common to all human beings, but deal with them from an all-embracing instead of a petty, individual point of view.

Nothing could be more commonplace than the subject-matter of Gretchen's tragedy or of *Romeo and Juliet*. Othello is jealous, Macbeth ambitious, Tartuffe a hypocrite, Shylock vindictive—as all men are

Werther is "romantic" in the same way as every young man in love is, and the story of Lear and his daughters would be too commonplace to be noticed in a newspaper. Psycho-analysis has shown us how commonplace the subject-matter of Greek tragedy is. The greatest works of visual art are equally banal in their subjects. The Mona Lisa is just a woman, the Sistine Madonna a mother, Rembrandt paints some old Jew or other, the Greeks portray a youth, and the Chinese painters even a sprig of blossom or an insect, but the Mona Lisa and the Madonna are womanhood and motherhood personified and the insect is the whole of life

A work of art is always symbolical, it does not copy, it *means*. The greatest work of art is that which means most to most people. That is why it is typical, the individual case serves as an example of the universal experience. Works of art are universally valid solutions of individual problems.

We have said that art is the means by which Man comes to an understanding with the world around him, and that the work of art is the result, the materialisation of this understanding, we may now add that through this materialisation the result of the understanding is made available for humanity.

A work of art ceases to have any significance for the artist once it is born, but its significance for the world only begins at the moment when its own life begins. The artist gets the satisfaction of disinterestedness, the loss of the feeling of selfhood, and therewith a feeling of enhanced personality, in the creative process, the work of art is the expression of this (more or less perfectly) achieved harmony between the individual and the universe, it is the answer to the question whether a balance between them is possible, and perpetuates what was merely a passing condition for the artist.

That and absolutely nothing else is the purpose of all works of art. By communicating this message to the spectator, reader or hearer, the work of art, which is a new live thing—alive in a higher sense than Nature—puts him into the condition in which it was itself produced, releasing him from his individuality and enhancing his personality. That and nothing else is the effect and the function of art

#### IV

We have seen how the same thing is classed as a natural phenomenon in the case of animals, and then called art when it applies to human beings. We found that a surplus of feeling was the fundamental condition of the production of art, and we also saw that science is beginning to attribute feeling to plants and even to the "unfeeling rock." In this word "feeling" lies the key to our problem.

A firm line has been drawn between Man and the rest of the world, consciousness and feeling have been attributed exclusively to Man, the non-human is supposed to be without either, and goes by the name of Nature.

According to this view, Man alone has feelings, which he projects into Nature. Since art is created out of feeling and arouses feelings it stands in contrast to Nature as something man-made.

But we look upon Man as a part of Nature and Nature as the universal life, and therewith the antithesis of art and Nature is at an end. All life is a single movement, all phenomena are endowed with the same feeling. This feeling is the vehicle and author of evolution, of upward development. Surplus emotion is always being generated, aiming at the enhancement of individuality and creating personality, what our senses perceive of this enhancement we call beauty. Nature is always efficient but she seems to us, over and above that, beautiful, the moment the work of men's hands fulfils its purpose completely beauty appears in it also.

Beauty is the gloriously useless in Nature, and the truly valuable thing spiritually. That is why Man loves flowers, loves the rose which pours out its surplus feeling in form, colour and scent. The vegetables which feed him he does not love, or not yet. Love makes the birds adorn themselves with bright-coloured feathers, and Man calls them beautiful. There is no distinction between the beauty of Nature and the beauty of art, only a difference of degree. Artistic creation begins at the point where what we call consciousness begins, but since everything is conscious, there is art in all Nature. And all artistic creation is Nature, for the simple reason that the most completely natural and most profound aim of all life reveals itself in art.

Life is the development of love, art its expression and its means of development. Art is one of the refining agents of life, it withdraws from sex what transcends the object of sex, but it also has an elevating and sublimating effect on sex itself—consider the connection between dancing, music, poetry and being in love. Art is a symbolisation of love and in its turn awakens love.

When human beings wish to foregather socially, they look about for a pretext, i.e., something they can all do together, like acting, dancing, making music, or together watching or listening to dancing, music or dramatic performances. People desire to transcend their own individualities, and the means they use are those of Nature herself—the instinct of nutrition and the sexual instinct, and the sublimations of the latter which we call art and which in their turn have a sublimating effect on the instincts<sup>1</sup>

Evolution is based on love and advances through it, and art is one of the means by which love evolves, as it is also, on the other hand, a product of this evolution of love.

All art symbolises love in some way or other and directs it to objects outside the self, the difference in what a drawing in the *Vie Parisienne* and a statue of Buddha symbolise and in the emotions which they rouse, immeasurable though it is, is one of degree, not of principle, anyone who finds the difference too great may take, say, Fragonard as a middle term.

Every man understands the art that corresponds to his emotional level, in those epochs where that level is generally high the artistic level is also high, and the big

<sup>1</sup> A direct method of getting outside one's individuality—getting rid of inhibitions, as the phrase is—exists, however, in alcohol. Under its influence, as is well known, people behave 'naturally'—that is to say, they become violently affectionate (or take a sudden dislike) towards their fellow creatures. The aphrodisiac effect of many drugs is akin to this, but it is a merely temporary, and not a sublimating, effect.

gap which, in an emotionally degraded age, separates the work of the great artist from the average performance is absent. But a work of art always implies, and creates, love, even when it is produced by fear.

To our former statement that art aims at bringing the individual into harmony with the universal Spirit and that works of art give material expression to this harmony when it is achieved and thereby produce a harmonious condition in other people, releasing them from their individuality and enlarging their personalities, we may now add that this harmony and its effects are based on love and nothing else. Love is the door through which the individual attains to an understanding of the universe. Love creates the spiritual child which in its turn inspires love in others. Love is the form under which all life whatsoever appears to Man. Love is the fundamental law of Nature, whereas art is an outward form in which Nature manifests herself, a means which she uses

## V

If reason finds it hard to admit that art is Nature, the highest form of Nature, that is not merely because reason misunderstands art, but, most of all, because it misunderstands Nature. We have already examined the scientific basis of art earlier on, if we now go on to investigate that of Nature we shall find that they are the same. Reason sees only the useful in Nature and mistakes this little part for the whole.

It gives a false picture of the world and is unable to understand life, and its progeny, the "exact science" of Materialism, has confirmed it in these errors. Nature was divided into "animate" and "inanimate", people failed to recognise the unity of life in all its forms, and



believing the imperfect image of the world reflected by the intellect to be the absolute truth, they called it Nature. Hence art had to be called untruth. In spite of the fact that metaphysics had long ago recognised that "Nature" is an illusion of the senses and that these have no access to the "thing in itself", science continued to regard this Nature as a known quantity. Metaphysics were simply dismissed as a figment of the brain. Metaphysics, and art too, certainly are such a figment—indeed, the term is highly appropriate—but so is the "Nature" of the Materialists. It is the picture of the world produced in our brains by the vibrations of the ether, light, sound, etc. Man creates Nature as he creates works of art, and just as every spectator creates the work of art anew by what he sees in it, so does every human being create a work of art which he calls Nature.

Science has long ago advanced to a deeper understanding of Nature, but the present generation has still been brought up entirely in the Materialist superstition. Science is full of new theories and hypotheses, but the school books are still Materialist catechisms.

And so the modern European understands neither what art is nor what Nature is, neither the animate nor the inanimate, neither the individual nor the universal.

Understanding of art will only become possible when people understand Nature better. And the key to Nature lies in one's own ego. For that reason I believe that psychology and the new theory of consciousness based on its discoveries must and will provide the foundations for an understanding of Nature and art alike.

It will be recognised that everything in Nature possesses consciousness, and therefore feeling, that everything feels and inspires love. It will be seen that everything is inspired by one and the same emotion, which creates the form under which it appears and in turn

recognises it in recognising itself. Because it is both within and without us, the figment of our brains is the truth. What obscures this truth is our feeling of selfhood, the main support of which is the intellect. This obscured truth we call Nature. Anything that removes our feeling of selfhood brings us nearer to absolute truth, and what does remove it is art.

Nature shows her real face to the artist, because he loves her—that is to say, opens his arms to her while eliminating his own ego, a work of art reveals to other people the truth in Nature that they are unable to see for themselves—that is the meaning of Wilde's paradox about Nature always imitating art.

The truth which art reveals to Man is the truth that he is not distinct from Nature and his fellows but identical with her and them. It lets him see for a moment that his individuality is an illusion and life a single whole. It is idle to dispute whether Man first creates Nature through his imagination, as he creates art, or whether phenomena are the primary thing and Man merely receives impressions of them. Both are true, because Man with his works of art and Nature are one and the same thing—appearance. "The things that must pass are only symbols", and the command of the oracle was "know thyself", for Man, in knowing himself, knows the All.

## 5 —ART AND SCIENCE

IF the term "science" is restricted to the exact or natural sciences, as was done in the nineteenth century, then science and art are opposites, and if in such an epoch people's conceptions of life and the world are based exclusively on natural science, then the whole epoch will be hostile to art though it may not admit it, even to itself.

Art is a means by which the self comes to terms with the universe, science is just such another. Absolute opposition between them only arises when science becomes materialistic. When it refuses to go beyond the physical and rejects everything spiritual, both in Man and in the world with which he has to come to terms, it becomes the deadly enemy of art, for art interprets the world of feeling.

This conception of science has become so much second nature to the modern European that one cannot help regarding science as an enemy when one is pleading the cause of art. But I am convinced that this narrow conception of science is merely a passing phase, or rather, that it already belongs to the past. In the beginning art and science were sisters, for some time they have been at loggerheads, and they are now about to make it up again.

They are not identical, certainly. Art is primarily emotional, science primarily rational, yet art cannot get on without reason, nor science without emotion, as Materialism thought it could.

Art is based on personality, it expresses the personality of the artist and addresses itself to the personal element in the spectator, it is invariably subjective, and therein lies its value. Science sets out to be universally valid and

aims at a maximum of objectivity. Nevertheless, the difference between it and art is only one of degree.

If personality really were a completely individual thing, a work of art would only be intelligible to its creator, if the subject were entirely separate from the object of knowledge (and thus from other "subjects") all communication would be impossible. The universal intelligibility of works of art bears witness to the feeling that is common to the Whole. The greater a work of art, the nearer to the truth, the more "objective," it is, for the simple reason that the emotions of the great personality which created it were not individual but universal.

Even for science, however, absolute objectivity is only attainable where it can weigh and measure, i.e., in mathematics and, at most, in the natural sciences. Yet even here objectivity becomes impossible the moment there is any question of *knowledge*, recourse is then had to hypotheses and theories. But these are the subjective creations of the great thinkers. All great scientific discoveries owe their existence to something besides observation and measurement and the adding-up of experiences. The thinker grasps the law underlying the phenomena—in other words, the unity behind the confusion of appearances—by a sudden jump, through the medium of intuition. The discoveries of a Galileo, a Kepler, a Newton or a Clerk Maxwell are "inspirations", quite on a par with those of the great artists.

The true savants are artists, with the artist's intuitive sense of unity.

What is called art stands to science as feeling does to reason—at once short of it and beyond it. The sub-conscious and the super-conscious are the domain of art, the fully conscious belongs to science. If we could observe primitive human beings who have not progressed as far as speech—and there are some tribes who are very near to

this state, in India for example—we should discover that they nevertheless knew and understood pictures, music and dancing, primitive thinking, which is admirably described by Jung in his *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*,<sup>1</sup> was pictorial. Speech and writing only came with the development of reason, and the same is true of mensuration, which is closely bound up with the consciousness of individuality. It is only in this stage that the birth of science becomes possible. Mankind's earlier experiences now become automatic and relapse into the sub-conscious, which is beyond the reach of reason and science. This is what I mean by "short of science". But everything that science succeeds in explaining rationally is thereby withdrawn from the realm of feeling and of art. When a rational explanation has become possible, a symbolic representation—and every artistic representation is symbolic—becomes not merely unnecessary but positively false. Science is pushing the frontiers further and further out behind which mystery, symbol, faith and art begin. She is justifiably proud of the fact and consequently indignant when her truths are forcibly suppressed—hence her fight against the Church. Any form of faith which contradicts the truths of science is dead already. European science had a hard fight of it against ecclesiastical orthodoxy, and now that this life and death struggle is behind it, it has itself become intolerant. It has rejected all belief along with religious belief, quietly denied the existence of everything that reason cannot explain, and in a manner at once tyrannical and naive declared itself omniscient, so far as omniscience is within human reach at all. The super-sensual, the metaphysical, the "miraculous" it has dismissed as an old wives' tale.

<sup>1</sup> Translated into English under the title of *Psychology of the Unconscious. A study of the transformations and symbolisms of the Libido. A contribution to the history of the evolution of thought.* London, 1916 (Translator's note)

But this is precisely the domain of art, the region "beyond science". Philosophy had established the limited nature of our knowledge as far back as the eighteenth century, but what did natural science need to bother about that? It remained as infallible as any Pope, until it was beaten with its own weapons, it is scientific progress that has put an end to the belief in the infallibility of natural science

This progress has taken place in so many different departments that the connection between the various items of new knowledge and their deeper significance are not at first sight obvious. The position may be summed up by saying that they have paved the way for a new outlook

Science, we said, is a means, like art, by which Man, or the self, comes to terms with the universe. Natural science had claimed to know what Man and the universe were—both were matter—and based its interpretation of the world on this knowledge, it was a dogma. But the progress of science has brought it to a point where it has no dogmatic explanation either for Man or for the universe or even for life as such. It admits quite openly that everything is ambiguous, mysterious, marvellous, it no longer deals in anything but hypotheses. It has become artistic and creative once more.

I can only refer briefly to a few of these new discoveries and theories, in order to illustrate what I have said. What strikes me particularly about all of them is the way in which they agree with or approximate to ancient Indian ideas. India intuitively discovered the truths that European science is now about to place on a rational basis. The things which in a great many (though by no means all) cases were expressed symbolically by the Indians and were therefore dismissed as nonsense and superstition or at the most as "poetic fancy"—i.e., as scientifically worthless—by a superficial rationalism, are now being proclaimed

once more by the most progressive European savants in modern scientific terminology.

Of these the new psychology and the theory of consciousness which is developing out of it seem to me to be the most important. The "sub-conscious" was first discovered by Taine. He is responsible for the telling comparison of consciousness to a mountain-range anchored to the bottom of the sea, with only isolated points protruding above the water-line—an admirable image of the dark, undifferentiated sub-conscious and of the consciousness which emerges from it clear, sharply defined but isolated. A variety of movements may be traced back to him—researches in the domain of hypnosis, suggestion and spiritualism, as well as the investigations of the psycho-analysts.

The thing they all have in common is the recognition of a hitherto unknown psychic region which is definitely not identical with consciousness and not intelligible to reason alone. The "sub-conscious" of the psycho-analysts is called instinct by Bergson, psychic phenomena of a hypnotic or magnetic nature by Charcot and his disciples or opponents (Liebault, Bernheim, Janet).

Through the observation of abnormal states of mind in hysterical patients or lunatics the doctors arrived at results which coincide with those of the philosophers who started from biology. Thereupon psycho-analysis discovered in the course of its researches that these phenomena, which were first only observed in sick people, are found in greater or less degree in everybody, and finally arrived at the conclusion (which was, of course, bound to meet with the most violent opposition from the rationalists) that Man is primarily irrational and governed by unconscious primitive instincts—the mainspring of his life is desire and its fulfilment.

Now the fundamental doctrine of Indian metaphysics

was the doctrine of desire. According to it, desire is the source of all evil, the obstacle to knowledge, the cause of illusion (*māyā*) "Slay desire" is the teaching of Hindu asceticism and Buddhistic overcoming of the world alike

Reichenbach's researches into "Od" (rays proceeding from human beings, which are the cause of psychic phenomena and, in a more general way, explain attraction and repulsion) and the theories of "animal magnetism" by which people tried to explain hypnosis, suggestion and certain spiritualistic phenomena, link these speculations up with the new discoveries and theories of pure physics, while at the same time they constitute a proof that the distinction between the physical and the psychic is an arbitrary one.

The discoveries of Rontgen and the Curries, the investigation of hitherto unknown rays (which can pass through "matter") and of radium, the ensuing experiments in transmutation of Crookes, and the hypothesis of the all-pervading ether, for which wireless telegraphy is no doubt responsible, complete the circle

The upshot of them is that only a small fraction of the vibrations of light, sound and ether are perceptible to Man, that is to say, his senses are absolutely untrustworthy. "Utterly deceived by the senses he walks through the world" and "Waking, sleeping, walking, the wise man remembers that the senses abide in the things of sense", is how the *Bhagavad Gita* puts it.

The rays which recent research has discovered are emitted by human beings also (an Englishman, whose name I unfortunately forget, has invented a machine for measuring them) correspond to the aura or "astral body" of the Indians. Wireless telegraphy provides an analogy to thought-transference or telepathy, which not only the Indians but many primitive peoples treat as an everyday occurrence. The Indians explain it by the "astral



matter", which belongs to Man in common with the Whole, and its vibrations, to which the kindred phenomena of suggestion and hypnosis may also be ascribed.<sup>1</sup>

Radium and its power of transmuting metals have led us back to the doctrine of the *prima materia* of the alchemists and the unity of all phenomena which we regard as material, which India has always taught.<sup>2</sup>

In quite other departments the theories of Arrhenius and Fliess concerning the determinateness of life-histories and the dependence of the individual on the group confirm the ancient doctrines of the Indians. I am firmly convinced that all the discoveries and theories that are still to come will tend in the same direction. We are on the threshold of a knowledge of the self and the universe entirely new to Europe, and it will be found exactly similar to that of the Indians. Only, it will reveal to the whole world what was confined to the initiated in India, and transport into the realm of reason what there belonged

<sup>1</sup> Incidentally I should like to call attention to the fact that India regarded these theories entirely as means to an end. The main idea is always to achieve a spiritual harmony. The investigation of "bodies" and "worlds", the complex and elaborate systems of *Yoga* (Union) with their breathing-exercises etc., are only means for producing the desired spiritual condition. They quite deliberately alter the rhythm of the individual in order to bring it into harmony with the universal rhythm. The conditions which, under the name of trance, clairvoyance, hypnosis, telepathy, have made their appearance here and there and been observed in certain subjects in Europe, as well as kindred phenomena which are traditionally described as supernatural and miraculous powers in the case of prophets and founders of religions, were deliberately induced among the Indians according to a scientific system, with the object of producing the state of consciousness which is common to all these phenomena and was supposed to bring with it a knowledge of the truth unclouded by the self. The miraculous performances of the modern Indian fakirs, which are vouched-for by so many Europeans, are no doubt based on the remnants of this tradition.

<sup>2</sup> How deeply the connection between all these phenomena is felt is proved by the fact, so baffling to the crude rationalist, that many of the greatest and most original thinkers in the domains of physics, chemistry, astronomy, psychology, and philosophy are the keenest promoters, and in many cases the most convinced supporters, of the study of "psychic phenomena". Among the presidents and members of the London Society for Psychical Research have been men like Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge, Charcot, Bergson, Lord Balfour, Flammarion and Lombroso were convinced "spiritualists", and the Curies also leaned strongly towards such views.

to the realm of intuition—and that will be the greatest step forward made by the human spirit since the dawn of history

For the Indian everything in the universe possesses life and consciousness. Different degrees of vibration make a phenomenon appear either fixed and lifeless like the minerals or alive and conscious like human beings. There is a continuous series of gradations between the mineral and the human being, and between the spiritual and the material. Everything is matter of greater or less grossness, of greater or less power of vibration. What we call soul the Indian calls astral matter, what we call reason he regards as a still subtler kind of matter, corresponding to a still more subtle "body" and "world". Above that only the Spirit rests eternal and unmoved, one and the same in the individual and the Whole, *Atman* and *Brāhman*.

But if all things are material, all things are also *Brāhman*, everything lives only through the spirit, and nothing can be made manifest without it. Beyond and outside the world of sense the Spirit rules in all its purity, and as such is completely indefinable. "Not this, not this" is all that language can say of it.

The imagination of India has exhausted itself in dividing and sub-dividing matter into bodies and worlds, the definitions and names are innumerable and confusing, but through them all runs the division into body, soul and spirit (*Brāhman* always remains outside and above the "bodies"). These correspond to what we should call the unconscious, the subconscious and the conscious. But beyond these India recognises the concept of the super-conscious. This is still lacking in European theories of knowledge, and in my opinion the real object of all the new movements is to arrive at it. Without it the whole thing would be not merely incomplete but a positive step

backwards as compared with rationalism. As long as psycho-analysis was purely reductive, it was unable to reach this concept, though the theories of Jung were a step in the right direction. He himself draws attention to the kinship between his ideas and Bergson's the super-conscious, without which there can never be any explanation of telepathy, prophetic dreams, visions, clairvoyance and the rest, is the "intuition" of Bergson.

As an example of what he wishes us to understand by "intuition"—instinct, he says, must be developed into intuition and raised to the same level as reason, if real knowledge is to be made possible—Bergson cites the process of artistic creation.

It is here that art and science are reconciled. Art has always created intuitively, science did so once and will do so again.

I should like to point out that the very greatest artists, like Goethe and Leonardo, were also great scientists. The superficial view treats that as a subsidiary talent running parallel with the main one, these men, it says in effect, were so brainy that they had something to spare for other departments than their own. But the real explanation is that one and the same intuition opens the door to the truth in all departments. Whether one calls it universal talent, a more highly organised nervous system, greater capacity for vibration, universal sympathy, a stronger libido or greater love, is a matter of indifference. In my opinion the last term of all is the most inclusive. Great science and great art spring from great love which reaches far beyond the self.

Nietzsche speaks somewhere of the ideal teacher of the future who will combine in himself the physician, the artist, and the priest—that is to say, love of mankind, love of the world, and love of God. That is the ideal of the future, and the character of the perfect teacher of the

truth. But it is also exactly the definition and position of the ideal Brahman. It is the ideal of the future, but such phenomena have certainly been known in the past too. One's thoughts need not fly at once to the great ideal figures like Christ, Francis of Assisi and the rest, who were at once medicine-men, teachers of the word of God, and supreme artists, for this combination of attributes was taken for granted in earlier times.

The priests of Egypt, Babylon and India were teachers of this kind, and art, medicine, and worship were inseparably connected even in the Christian monasteries. It was only later that the different manifestations of the love that transcends the individual were separated on "professional" lines, to the impoverishment of the artist, the priest and the physician and the total destruction of the "teacher".<sup>1</sup>

From the moment when the priesthood, in the absence of faith, became a lie, this was an essential development, hence the ideal teacher of tomorrow will not become a reality until mankind is ripe for a new faith, i.e., a new spiritual outlook, and a new spiritual truth, foreshadowed by art and established by science, finds its prophet—in other words, till the "Messiah" comes.

Art and Science are both preparing the way for this Messianic age. When Jung says that it is the task of the psycho-analyst "to induce people to live lives of real faith, in spite of having lost their religious beliefs" he is calling for just this new faith and this new teacher.

Who knows? Perhaps the coming teacher of mankind is a nerve-specialist by "profession", unless by any chance he is a musician and—what a thought!—a dabbler in

<sup>1</sup> Monasticism excluded sexual and family love in order to make the power of love available for other purposes. That is the explanation of celibacy and the insistence on chastity and also of the hysterical phenomena and sexual aberrations in priestly orders, monasteries and everything of the same kind.

medicine and theology, perhaps one of the old orthodox faiths will produce a new prophet who will burst its bonds and teach the real "Christian Science"; he may even—highest flight of fancy of all—be a teacher in a *gymnasium*!

It may be that he will need to have been dead many centuries before mankind realises what it possessed in him and before his influence can become operative. Paracelsus passed in his own day—and still passes—for a charlatan, Mesmer for a rogue, those bold savants who openly go in for psychical research are regarded as half idiots, half rogues, at once deceivers and deceived, the prophets and Messiahs have been exposed—O great discovery and profound explanation!—as hysterical or epileptic, a still harder fate was reserved for Bergson—he became the fashion, like the tango. As for artists who presume to have views on science, they can be dismissed with a pitying smile, for in the first place they have no official right to express an opinion on scientific subjects, and in the second, they are border-line cases anyhow and ought to be thankful that they have not been locked up along with their cousins in a lunatic asylum or their other relatives in gaol. But His Excellency the Herr Geheimrat and Minister of State, W. von Goethe, whose purely scientific achievements were not inconsiderable, in spite of the fact that he studied Paracelsus and was a poet in his leisure hours, has said. "the artist has a right to be superstitious".

I recommend this saying as a subject for meditation

## 6.—ART AND LIFE THE ARTIST'S PROBLEM

It is not life and art that are opposed to each other—for art is life, emotional life raised to a higher power—but “reality” and the spirit, and the contradictory demands of these two are responsible for the artist's inner conflict

“The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak” applies to every conflict in the soul (“conscience” *versus* “practical reason”); in the case of the artist this conflict is a standing one, so to speak, it is the basis of artistic creation, which is produced by the compulsion to resolve it.

In a rapturously lyrical essay entitled *What is Art?* Tagore has described how a work of art arises from an overflow of feeling, from great joy. Although he gives in a few words a profounder and truer definition of the creative process than many a learned tome, he nevertheless seems to me only to give us half the truth.

Art undoubtedly does arise from a wealth of feeling, yet certainly not always—perhaps very seldom—from joy, but rather from pain.

It is a fundamental truth that action of any sort arises from the feeling of dissatisfaction, desire induces the action which is calculated to bring satisfaction.

Psycho-analysis has also made its contribution to the understanding of the process of artistic creation. The work of art, say the psycho-analysts, like the dream, is the fulfilment of a wish. The artist seeks in imagination the satisfaction which reality denies him, and attains it through the creation of the work of art.

The two explanations between them give us the whole truth, the second of them moreover accounts for the

application of these stores of emotion to the special purpose of artistic creation.

Not only has the artist as such a highly <sup>emotional</sup> nature, but for some reason or other this nature can only find satisfaction in imagination, not in reality, in the spirit and not in the flesh.

Undoubtedly, the essence of the artist lies, in the first place, in his great emotional capacity. He has, as we say, a more sensitive nervous system than other people—that is to say, it reacts to subtle vibrations which other systems would not register

His organs of sense are more delicately constructed, more sensitive to rhythm in the vibrations of light, of which we are aware as colour, and in those of sound, and at the same time creative of rhythm. Rhythm “goes to his hands”, as dance music goes to one’s feet—very few people can abstain from moving their feet when they hear a good waltz. I suspect that the matter of which he is made is in some way less closely packed—perhaps all higher grades of sensibility from the minerals upwards are to be explained thus—and it may also be possible to reduce this quality to terms of chemistry and so, perhaps, to produce it at will. All this explains the artistic temperament, but it leaves the problem of artistic creation untouched. All so-called explanations which consist in ascribing it to some instinct hitherto unknown—the play-instinct, the imitative instinct and all the rest of them—tell us nothing more than that poverty comes from lack of money, they merely substitute one word for another.

The greater emotional capacity of the artist expresses itself in artistic creation because it is precluded from finding satisfaction in “real” creation. There is only one feeling, one emotion, one instinct, one libido, but there are many ways of employing it, many channels into which it can be directed

A libido extending beyond the needs of everyday life is the primary condition of artistic creation, but it is not enough to explain it. It is equally the cause of hysteria, neurosis, "psychic" powers, and mystical rapture, and may also express itself quite simply in the form of extreme sexuality. People have long recognised the kinship between all these phenomena, indeed, they have only too often wrongly treated them as synonymous, substituting identity for kinship, or, alternatively, raised a great outcry about the insult to art and religion. The libido is the raw material out of which the most various things, differing widely in value, are made, nevertheless the recognition of the kinship between the types is capable of yielding valuable contributions to our understanding of one of them.

What is common to them all is a great capacity for loving. Where this expresses itself in the form of sheer sexuality which is able to find satisfaction in reality, no conflict arises. But it cannot do so completely with any higher type of human being. Faust tried it in vain, Don Juan succeeded, but at the price of ruin to himself. The anonymous poet (the common people) who first created this constantly recurring legendary figure knew that Don Juan was guilty of a tragic fault. Nothing in Nature uses its libido entirely for its own pleasure, without also creating beauty, i.e., pleasure for other people. And it is at once the duty and the need of Man, with his unsurpassed stores of emotion, to sublimate his libido to the highest possible point. He converts sex into love, thought and art, for the benefit of others. The hysterical subject, like all neurotics, is an example of unsuccessful sublimation. Finding no satisfaction in reality, he takes refuge in fantasies which may reach the point of insanity. The artist succeeds in finding the satisfaction (that reality denies him) in the activity of his imagination. Why? Because his



imagination is creative. All libido wants to create. To the individual its only object may seem to be to procure pleasure for himself, but the evolutionary process is out to create life. A relatively small amount of libido is sufficient for physical propagation, all the emotion that is left over when that purpose is served goes to the creation of spiritual and mental life, of true human progress. Consequently, the less of the libido is ear-marked for physical purposes, the more spiritual life will be created. When, therefore, evolution wants to produce a spiritual creator, she takes care that he shall turn away from physical reality unsatisfied. Human beings have also attempted to produce this result themselves, instinctively and sometimes even consciously—in the latter case, hedged round with mysteries and secret rites. The diversion of the libido from sexual intercourse in order to make it available for higher purposes is the idea at the bottom of the monastic communities (which in their early days really were homes of art and science and exponents of unselfish charity), of the celibacy of the priesthood and the rule of chastity in the knightly orders (e.g., the Templars), and it is, no doubt, also the original idea of the order of Freemasons. We find it among the Essenes and among the Buddhists, the students' unions still contain a faint echo of it, and many of the doings of modern mystics which have been made public—generally through proceedings in the law courts—lead one to suppose that a deliberate training in this direction forms part of their educational system. It is well known that a tradition and a doctrine of immemorial antiquity on the subject exist in India. In the last analysis, it always works down to the same process: selfish desire has to be transformed into disinterested sympathy, the rhythm of the individual subordinated to the universal rhythm.

The true saint would be a man with no physical desires

whatever, such as we only know from ideal figures like Christ and Buddha, on the other hand we do know of men who became "saints" by conquering their lusts and sublimating their libido, in the manner so splendidly described in the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine. Such men betake themselves to works of disinterested brotherly love, but exactly the same thing happens in the case of the artist, works of art being essentially disinterested.

This kinship between art and religion has all the attraction of strangeness for the modern European—but only because he is accustomed to look at both from a one-sided, individualistic point of view. How near the kinship between Saint Francis of Assisi and Fra Angelico is! How close the connection between art and religion in the Middle Ages, how inseparable the monk and the artist in Buddhist art!

We must not, however, rest satisfied with this narrow explanation of "religion", but recognise that disinterestedness is a primary condition of artistic creation, as it necessarily is of all spiritual creation.

The more the influence of religion weakened, the worse the conflict between reality and the spirit became for the artist. Every great ideal has the power to make the sacrifice it demands easy for those who believe in it, in fact, every ideal is a religion, and the artist, for whom orthodoxy has ceased since the Middle Ages to be a possible ideal, has made art his religion. He no longer needs to go round by way of "religion", but sacrifices directly to his goddess Art.

No sublimation is possible without self-sacrifice, self-sacrifice is the fundamental law of evolution. New life is always achieved at the cost of sacrificing a portion of the individuality, and the higher the organism, the greater the sacrifice demanded from it. It is the duty of every living creature to engender new and (in the course of evolution)

higher life through self-sacrifice. The plant appears to succeed in this without effort. The blossom turns to fruit and falls when it is ripe (who can say how much the flower would like to go on flowering for ever?). Lower forms of animal life propagate by splitting, the definite division into two sexes, and with it sexual desire (the desire for reunion of the sexes), only appears in the higher animals. The pains of childbirth now begin and progeny becomes less and less numerous, till we come to Man. At this stage new and greater sacrifices begin to be demanded. Man is to go beyond the sexual instinct, to bring forth not merely physical but spiritual life. Who can guess what sacrifices and struggles the development of the two sexes entailed in its day? And now here is evolution demanding yet further sacrifices. All humanity, all culture, science and art, everything that distinguishes Man can only be produced at the cost of a continual sacrifice of physical in the interests of spiritual life.

All religions symbolise this sacrifice in some form or other, it is the substance of all Mysteries. In their laws and commandments they all glorify and insist on the sacrifice of selfish interests, be it crudely in the shape of human or animal sacrifices, or in its highest form in the expiatory death of the Saviour of the world. And ethics do just the same, whether they proclaim the law under the name of the "categorical imperative" or the "rights of personality", for the contradiction between "egoism" and "altruism" is an illusion, personality can only develop through the sacrifice of its lower impulses, which are just the ones that run counter to the interests of other people. "egoism" can only attain its ends through "altruism".

Different as the forms may be in which it appears, the sacrifice involved is always the same—namely that of love.

The artist's conflict is a conflict between satisfaction of the erotic instinct in the ordinary sense of the term and the sublimation of it into artistic creation.

The artist is a man with an unusually large amount of affection for all living things. He wants to get near to them, know them, and he wants to create life, for the secret of great love is that it reaches beyond the individual in search of the eternal.

Were the artist a saint there would be no conflict to trouble him, but he is a human being, indeed the most human—the most sensitive to life—of beings.

No one has a greater capacity for pleasure than he or more temptation to realise it in physical life, but whatever he gives to life is given at the expense of art.

The schism may be more profound or less profound, the compromise more successful or less so, but it is always the cause and essential condition of artistic creation. The artist who plunges into life and forgets his task ceases to be creative, if he would dedicate himself wholly to art he must renounce all personal love, give up all hope of earthly happiness. Actually, he invariably compromises.

Great tragedies only happen to great personalities. The average artist is "unhappily married" or the like. He neglects his family because he finds his work more interesting, or his wife because other women seem to him more serviceable for the purpose of his art. He is a bad husband and a bad father. Or, on the other hand, he submits to the claims of family life, and his art suffers. That is why so many of the very greatest artists marry their cooks or their models—they thereby make the smallest possible concession to the demands of life. An artist who is happy in love is a monstrosity. Heine's recipe, "out of my great sorrows I fashion my little songs", is in general the true one, and it is tactless to go nosing

round in order to find out how great those sorrows were. Goethe loved unhappily, wrote *Werther* and killed him instead of killing himself—his own life did not belong to him. What a subject of continual misunderstanding the “heartlessness” of the artist is! Though it may sometimes be carried to a gruesome pitch, as when Tintoretto painted the dead body of his favourite daughter, it is not lack of feeling but lack of egoism that prompts such actions.

Since art grows out of unhappy love, artists are often sexually abnormal. In a certain sense artists are always abnormal—else they would be just ordinary people. W. Fliess claims to have established the fact biologically that an abnormally large amount of “feminine” substance is present in the artist in addition to the normal “masculine” substance—and *vice versa* in the case of the woman artist. I am convinced of the truth of his discovery, but even without this scientific confirmation it seems to me obvious that it must be so. Understanding is only possible through sympathy, and sympathy is based on kinship. Though women may be unintelligible to the purely masculine man (who is, of course, a fiction in this absolute form), they are intelligible to the artist in so far as he is himself feminine. It is unnecessary to inquire how many male artists have feminine features or how many women artists a masculine strain in them, the fact that Goethe created Gretchen and Klarchen, Racine Phèdre, Shakespeare Desdemona and Ophelia, Leonardo the Mona Lisa, and so on *ad infinitum*, is enough to establish this truth.

Apart from all this the artist as such plays a woman’s part in the business of spiritual conception and parturition, whereas he is masculine in his will to form, he combines both sexes in himself in a more or less harmonious blend.

Should he be conspicuously abnormal sexually—which

is very common, as it is with other sorts of great men (Michelangelo and Cæsar are sufficient examples)—that must on no account mislead us into supposing that his abnormal constitution in itself explains his artistic activity or causes it. Why on earth should a man with exaggeratedly feminine feelings be more artistically constituted than a normal human being? Are women better creative artists than men? No, it is only in so far as his nature makes it difficult or impossible for him to obtain satisfaction in reality, in so far as his love is unhappy love, that the sexually abnormal man—supposing he is successful in sublimating his feelings to the pitch of disinterestedness—is marked out to be an artist, or some other sort of altruist. The harder the sacrifice demanded of him, the more profound will his work be, which may explain why we find this handicap in the lives of many of the very greatest.

Inevitably, therefore, there is a tragic conflict at the bottom of all artistic creation. The sublimation of the libido and the sacrifice which this involves are the ultimate basis, but that must not mislead us into a narrow or one-sided sexual interpretation of the tragedy. The bird sings his best when he is blind, the artist has to long for the unattainable. Not only must he not find a completely satisfactory outlet for his love in reality, but he must not find his happiness there at all.

Poverty, illness, losses—any means of keeping unsatisfied desire alive in the genius come ready to Fate's hands. Homer, according to the profoundly significant legend, was blind. Watteau was a consumptive and a doomed man when he produced that exquisitely tender love-poem *L'embarquement pour Cythère*. Beethoven was deaf when he wrote the Ninth Symphony. The most profoundly moving works are born of hopeless sorrow. We find the nobility that sorrow confers in the works of the ageing

Rembrandt and the dying Mozart. In art sorrow finds its balm and desire its fulfilment.

Where this sorrow, this unsatisfied desire, is lacking, a work of art, no matter how beautiful, leaves us unsatisfied. The art that springs from a superfluity of joy leaves us at the bottom of our hearts unmoved, even when the artist's name is Rubens or Titian.

All great art is based on the tragedy of despair, but we must not pity the artist. If he knows the bottomless pit of misery, he also knows a joy that is his alone. What reality denies him, his dreams give him—and mankind with him—in a thousand times more beautiful form. All longing, the most sensual and the most super-sensual, is longing for release from the self. The narrow individual ego seeks to transcend itself and find eternity by creating something new. The artist sacrifices his own ego and creates the immortal work which is born again with each spectator.

The conflict of the ego and reality is the motive power behind artistic creation, self-surrender and renunciation of reality is the sacrifice demanded of the artist, the conquest of reality and the creation of his work, in which his ego achieves a purer and higher immortality, are his reward.

Art releases us from ourselves, that is its true function. Tragedy, the theme of which is always the struggle of the individual against the universe, and the destruction of the individual, or death, has a liberating effect. Only love and death bring release from the self. that is the content of all art.

Humour and satire form no exception: they are only another way of escaping from the self. They show the individual his absurd unimportance instead of exhibiting his impotence in a tragic light. The profoundest humour comes near to tears, the highest tragedy to a smile.

In the highest art the original conflict is so completely overcome that it is no longer felt. Such art is cheerful. The more universal the painter's personality is, the nearer he gets to it. There are artists in whose lives we seem to find only sunshine, no shadow. In Goethe's life, for instance, there is no tragic conflict, and yet his art is the highest art—but then we know little of Goethe. He tells us somewhere how he has always felt the urge to keep his real personality to himself and wear a mask, and when he was questioned about the meaning of the "Mothers" in *Faust*, he replied "It is not lawful for me to reveal that".

To the world he presented the mask of an artist in living, he withdrew his ego from life and gave it to art. Of Goethe the man we only know the non-essentials. Those who miss the tragic element in his life have forgotten Werther and Faust in contemplating the mask of the Minister of State.

The conquest of the ego went so far in Goethe's case that he was able to create the most universal and typical human beings, such as only Shakespeare has done besides him. It is quite logical that nothing should be known of Shakespeare's life, that his very existence should be called in question.

What does his petty human fate matter to us? Hamlet and Lear, Puck and Ariel, Juliet and Lady Macbeth—these are Shakespeare's immortal personality.

When Goethe says "I have always viewed all my life and work purely symbolically", he gives us the key to the understanding of his essential nature. He came near to overcoming the world, for he had recognised that it, including his ego, was of no importance.

The greatest art stands high above the conflict between reality and the spirit, having recognised reality as the mask of the spirit and the ego as illusion.

Instead of reality it sees the truth, and with the dis-



## ANTITHESSES IN LIFE OF ART

appearance of the ego individuality also disappears. Thus we come to the greatest artists, who are nameless; they seem to be Nature herself. The ego has ceased to be; desire, conflict and pain are overcome.

The greatest art of all has that gentle smile which one may call cheerful or melancholy, sublime or resigned, without exhausting its nature. It is not the rueful smile of Don Quixote, not the half-ironical smile of the Mona Lisa, not the cruel smile of the Sphinx or the statues of the Assyrian and Babylonian Kings, it is the smile of some of the choicest specimens of Greek sculpture, the "smile of Rheims", and the smile of Buddha in the works which reflect his spirit.



## PART III

### *ANTITHESES IN THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT*



## I.—BODY AND MIND

DUALISM teaches that there is a fundamental cleavage between body and mind, Monism regards them as one. The Materialist, who explains everything spiritual as a product of matter and the Idealist, for whom matter is a creation of mind and therefore, strictly speaking, an illusion, are both equally monistic. The quarrel between Dualism and Monism is almost as old as the human race, and no solution has been found to it.

The materialistic nineteenth century refuted Dualism by arguments derived from natural science, mental activity was proved to depend on physical functions, there was no mystery about physical nature it was reality, mind, about which nothing could be proved, was an illusion. This seemed indisputable till the moment when a more advanced knowledge was forced to confess that the physical no more admitted of proof than the mental. If mind had been explained as a product of matter, matter could now be called an illusion of our senses—and both with equal justification.

The fact is that the problem does not admit of a rational solution at all, because Man, when it comes to making judgments about his own nature, has nothing to help him but his highly imperfect organs of sense and his problematical mental processes.

But outside and beyond reason lies feeling, and with it faith. The human race has always believed in a spiritual cause behind the physical world, and thorough-going Materialism, in offering it the refuge of "spontaneous generation" as the ultimate cause of things, was

proposing a greater impossibility than the metaphysical and many of the religious systems had done

Faith admits of no argument and the saying of Tertullian, *Credo, quia absurdum*, is the final answer to all rationalistic arguments.

One point, however, is frequently overlooked, the fact that we can know neither body nor mind does not prevent us from getting to know about the relations between them. In any case, we have no knowledge of anything absolute, all we know is relations between unknown quantities, our world is relative. Our ignorance of the true nature of body and mind does not prevent us from extending our knowledge of the relations—the boundary, if you will—between them

It is my belief that in the course of evolution a better knowledge of the relative brings the human race nearer to the absolute, to truth, but even for those who do not share this belief, the study of relations is the only possibility, and for the “rational man” it is also the one thing that matters, namely the practical thing.

Nevertheless it is precisely the “rational man” who is most violently opposed to research along this line. According to him, the distinction between body and mind is definite and unalterable, and everything that cannot be demonstrated physically is an illusion

This has not prevented progress in that field, but it has made the work more difficult. Sooner or later the moment comes when research can demonstrate its spiritual discoveries physically—and once they take their place in the text-books and encyclopædias, behold, for these people, another absolute truth established!

The greatest obstacle to knowledge has been individualism. If you separate each body in an absolute way from all others and, further, if you regard mental activity

as tied down to each individual body, you thereby make all extension of the mind beyond its physical limits, all effect on the minds of other individuals, incomprehensible. In that case, communication between people would only be conceivable through the medium of speech or writing. But neither the child nor primitive man uses speech and writing, they guess the thoughts—or rather, they feel the feelings—of the other man, as one sees in the higher animals. To call this instinct, without saying how the process is made possible, explains nothing. It is only made possible by the direct action of the individual's mind on the mind of other individuals.

As it happens, modern life provides us with a standing opportunity of observing this. People are so generally untruthful that, if the truth be told, only very few people believe what other people *say*, they let their instincts decide whether so and so is speaking the truth or not. Mind acts directly on mind.

This would be inconceivable if everybody's mind was totally different from everybody else's, for communication is only possible where there is kinship. We react to the spiritual rays emanating from a person as we react to light-rays—that is to say, we are only sensitive to certain vibrations of light and certain spiritual vibrations. Things that vibrate too fast or too slowly we do not consciously see or feel, but they affect us all the same. Modern research has shown how limited our capacity for sensation is and what an infinity of rays may exist unknown to us. The position is just the same with regard to mind. The fact that we can never perceive the workings of the spirit proves nothing against the existence of a spiritual cause.

There have, however, always been individuals who did feel spiritual influences that remained hidden from other people, and, with the exception of the short era of

Materialism, which is now closed, mankind has always believed in such things and ascribed them to "supernatural" spiritual causes. Because the world believed in an individual body and soul, it ascribed these influences to spiritual forces lying outside them, and because spirit cannot be conceived without a body, and even with one only on more or less anthropomorphic lines, people came to believe in spirits and demons.

In every age there have been individuals to whom supernatural spiritual powers were ascribed because people were unable to explain the facts they observed in the light of their knowledge of the human body and mind. They were known as oracular priestesses and sybils, prophets and saints, medicine-men and sorcerers or witches—persons in whom gods or demons dwelt and worked.

Rationalism laughed at the supernatural in every form, but more recent research has re-discovered it. The progress consists in the fact that nowadays people are making successful efforts to find rational explanations for these phenomena, that they neither adopt nor deride a "superstition" but try to get to the bottom of it—in short, that they are coming to recognise the supernatural as natural.

The question at issue here is that of the relations between body and mind, and between bodies and minds, by getting to know about these, we shall also get nearer to a knowledge of forces which are still unknown.

About the 'eighties of last century science began to pay serious attention to psychic phenomena. Spiritualism and occultism in its theosophical form—the foundation of the Theosophical Society by Madame Blavatsky falls within this period—directed general attention to transcendental problems once more, and Charcot and his



school applied themselves to the study of hypnotism and magnetism. Suggestion, hypnosis, magnetism and telepathy, automatism and somnambulism were recognised as facts and investigated by an ever-increasing body of experts, chiefly doctors. Meanwhile the problems of survival after physical death, of the existence of extra-physical worlds and communication with them and their inhabitants were still relegated to the realms of superstition and left to the spiritualists and occultists<sup>1</sup>.

The factors that all these phenomena and problems appeared to have in common were (1) Long-distance action on the part of the body outside and beyond its physical boundaries, and (2) direct action of mind on body.

With certain people in certain states of consciousness the will of another person or even of the person himself is capable of producing a physical effect, e.g., the cure of an illness. This state of consciousness was termed hypnotic sleep when artificially produced and natural somnambulism when it arose without external agency. In this condition of reduced consciousness a man is receptive of suggestion, suggest to him that he feels pain and he will feel it, suggest that his pains have ceased and they will cease. Here, therefore, we have a case of mind acting directly on body.

The phenomena and the cures in question were for a long time denied, when people were forced to admit their existence, they took the line that in cases where an illness was a matter of imagination, i.e., of a mental nature, as in nervous disorders, there was nothing impossible in their being cured by the substitution of one imaginary notion for another. That is to say, the direct action of mind on mind was admitted.

<sup>1</sup> The activities of the London Society for Psychical Research and of isolated savants like Lombroso, Flammarion, Rochas, Duprel, Schrenck-Notzing, etc form an exception.

But when, on the top of that, purely physical ailments—diseases of the skin, for instance—were successfully cured by suggestion (the miracles of Lourdes and of Christian Science had no doubt shown the way), they had to admit that mind had acted directly on body, was not a skin-disease physical and suggestion mental?

So they looked about for an explanation.

The illness (they argued) was indubitably physical, but suggestion could also be explained physically, by magnetism. They went back to the notions of Mesmer and, supported by the new theories of radiation and Od, declared that the cure was due not to suggestion as such but to the rays emanating from the magnetiser's body. Thus the eternal strife of idealism and realism repeated itself in this field too.

Both theories had their advantages. Magnetism, besides providing a rational explanation of the cures wrought by the doctors, was able to make the psychic phenomena of Spiritualism—table-turning, rapping, etc.—intelligible, while suggestion (or auto-suggestion) seemed more plausible in the case of automatic phenomena, such as automatic writing and drawing, and of somnambulism—in a word, wherever the phenomenon was produced by an outside agent.

In my opinion, the two theories are not mutually exclusive. I believe in the reciprocal inter-action (not parallelism) of the "physical" and the "spiritual".

Mind, in the form of will, the desire of the healer, acts on the patient, but it is able to do so because the said will generates rays of a material (?electrical) nature, which have an effect on the patient. I believe in the material transmission of the mental idea. The experiments in which the suggestion of a pin-prick in the arm, say, actually produces the characteristic marks of a prick in the medium's arm, are well known, and, on the other

hand, it is also known that in certain hypnotic states a real prick may not be felt. The physical effect only takes place when the mind raises no opposition. As I have said, each acts on the other. Certain bodily states produce (or facilitate) spiritual phenomena, and the will, on its side, can induce physical phenomena.

It was observed on a certain occasion that the milk of a nursing mother had been poisoned as the result of a sudden shock. The poison was thereupon analysed and a culture of it made, and it was shown that infection with this poison reproduced all the symptoms of shock (paralysis, etc.) in the woman.

Every mental effort undoubtedly gives rise to bodily, i.e., physical and chemical, phenomena. A machine has been invented which, in a certain sense, measures the degree of the effort. The act of thinking gives rise to vibrations which can be measured by this machine in the form of an electric current. Everybody knows the opposite fact, namely, that the presence of a greater or smaller amount of electricity in the atmosphere has an effect on thinking. That material nature influences both the human body and the human mind is taken for granted everywhere, but the converse, that the human body and mind influence Nature, is regarded as fantastic.

The responsibility lies with the one-sidedly materialistic outlook of modern Europe. Since it regards mind as a product of matter, it cannot admit it as the cause of material phenomena. But to an unprejudiced observer of the facts, at one moment it is the body, at the next the mind that appears as the cause or effect of physical and mental phenomena.

We have set up entirely illusory frontiers between body and mind. In the phenomenal world, in which we live, there is neither pure (or absolute) mind nor pure matter, but only transitional stages on the road that leads

from matter to mind. The antithesis between body and mind is unresolvable only because it is non-existent "Body" and "mind" are necessary working hypotheses. Admittedly, to recognise the unity of all being gets one no further scientifically, simply because all intellectual activity is based on the comparison and measurement of the differences which the intellect has created, but one must always remember that they are only a makeshift and not make inquiry more difficult by proclaiming these makeshifts as absolute and eternal truths or "laws of nature".

Since there are only intermediate stages between matter and mind, it makes no difference, theoretically, whether one calls everything matter or everything mind. I consider it desirable, however, purely on grounds of language, which I shall explain later, to call all phenomena material.

I do, indeed, assume a purely spiritual cause, but, having done so much, I leave it wholly out of account. Will produces life. This cannot be proved, but the opposite assumption contradicts both our experience and our feelings.

I cannot believe that the organ comes first and evokes the desire to use it, I can only believe the opposite, that the desire produces the organ. Just as the flying-machine did not come first, and the desire in Man to fly afterwards, but the will to fly produced the machine, so, in the course of evolution, desire has always produced action and the organs necessary to action.

But once this spiritual first cause has been admitted, there is nothing to prevent one from calling all its subsequent effects material, including those which make up what we usually call the spiritual as opposed to the physical world.

Only, one is then confronted at once by a new intellectual

puzzle. If there is nothing but a transition from "matter" to "mind", then there must be numerous stages on the road. If everything is matter, then we shall have to find different names for these various phenomena according as they approximate more or less to the purely material, we shall have, in fact, to postulate a series of matters of different degrees of materiality.

This is what the Indians have done, and I believe the Europeans would do well to follow their example

The key to our problem is contained in two fundamental principles of Indian philosophy. The first is the doctrine of the purely material world which is composed of matter of differing degrees of subtlety. The second and more important—since everything else follows from this fundamental notion—is the doctrine of the one and indivisible Spirit, eternally at rest in and beyond this eternally changing matter. This indivisible and changeless Spirit is the cause of all phenomena. I remarked above that I would rather, on purely linguistic grounds, classify all phenomena as material than as spiritual, the explanation is that the European languages have no words for this notion of the Spirit. The *Brāhman* of the Indians is not what we call God, it is nearer to what we should call the Cosmic Spirit (or, with Emerson, the "over-soul"), but for the fact that it is not merely the sum of all things spiritual but, apart from that, absolute and transcendental, whereas what we call "spirit" (seeking artificially to divide it from the body), by which we mean reason and feeling, is to the Indian not *Brāhman*, but merely a more subtle kind of matter, not cause but effect.

The Indians distinguish between physical, etheric, instinctive (impulsive) and rational matter, and, over and above that, recognise sub-divisions of what we should call purely spiritual. The only thing that they regard as Spirit, as true, is *Brāhman*, which is the motive power

behind all these matters and is called *Atman* in the form in which it mirrors itself in the individual creature.

Hence no life, no motion, no matter is conceivable apart from *Brāhman*. Matter is merely the form under which *Brāhman* manifests itself, a veil for it, *māya*. The more subtle the matter, the thinner the veil, and the whole of evolution (which presupposes an involution) is a gradual lifting of the veil which shrouds the truth, a development from "body" to "mind". I will not here go into the metaphysical question of the why and wherefore of this process. Perhaps there is no answer to this eternal question. The only thing that matters here is to try and understand the process itself.

Life is motion, rhythmical motion, which we take in, as vibrations, through our sense-organs, but also give out from ourselves. In this double process lies the solution of the psychic problem. The life of the universe is, in the words of Tagore, a rhythmic dance—which tallies exactly with the account our theories of atoms and electrons give of it. Individual rhythms operate inside the great universal rhythm. Each kind of matter has its own rate of vibration, or, in the language of physics, its density. There are "worlds" consisting of the same matter as the different bodies, and just as the human being has bodies of different kinds of matter (it must always be remembered that they all interpenetrate each other and form a unity, they merely represent a methodological device), so do these all operate in their appropriate spheres. The vibrations of the etheric sphere act on the etheric body, those of the instinct-sphere on the instinct-body, and so on.<sup>1</sup>

Each individual creature, however, has its own rhythm,

<sup>1</sup> These bodies—in other words, the power of reacting to more subtle vibrations—only come into existence in the course of evolution. Minerals have only the material body, plants the etheric, and so on.

in virtue of which it exists as a phenomenon and feels itself an individual, sees and feels other things or persons as separate units. It is individual in so far as its rhythm does not fit in with the universal rhythm, but it only acquires personality through *Atman*.

The individual rhythm is conformable to what we call consciousness. If that is diminished, suppressed or intensified, the individual rhythm ceases (though not perhaps entirely) and its place is taken by the universal rhythm. When that happens, the individual is free to get into touch with the world and becomes one with it. Each of his bodies is thus able to get into touch with each of the spheres, or, to put it in another way, his "body" or his "mind" can act, and conversely be acted upon, over any distance up to the extreme limits of this world.

This hypothesis, and no other known to me, is capable of accounting for all psychic and occult phenomena. It will be a long time before they all admit of scientific demonstration, but modern science is already employing very similar hypotheses, the material atoms, ever changing and hence common to all things, which correspond to the physical bodies and spheres of the Indians, perform their rhythmic dance in the all-pervading ether (cf the etheric bodies and spheres). Further than that science has not yet progressed, but the researches of radiology, the discovery of radio-activity and of the human aura, which has been both measured and photographed (though the discovery has not yet been officially accepted), and, further, the measurement and photographing of vibrations produced by thoughts, have paved the way for the discovery of the bodies and spheres that still remain unknown. Just as electricity (?) is transmitted through the ether, so is instinct through the instinct-sphere (the sense of smell, which has fallen into decay in Man, undoubtedly plays a part here) and thought through the thought-sphere. What

we call intuition is the reception of subtler vibrations from spheres from which the majority of people are cut off.

The course of evolution is, no doubt, always the same. First, a subtler sensibility appears in a few individuals, picks up the hitherto unknown vibrations and thus builds up the new body. But when these experiences, which we call psychic phenomena, become general, we may conclude that the human race is about to develop a new body, or rather, to incorporate new vibrations in its consciousness. Evolution is nothing more or less than the growth and extension of consciousness and is never finished. It goes steadily on, in spite of all the decrees of academic wisdom, always approaching nearer, if not necessarily in a straight line, to the knowledge of truth.

Once one is familiar with the idea that our bodies can get into touch with the universe as soon as they switch off their individual rhythm, even if one only accepts it as a hypothesis, one has a general explanation of the possibility of all psychic and occult phenomena. The rest of the job must be left to accurate scientific observation, measurement and comparison, which will in due course produce a scientific explanation—in so far as anything can be explained at all.

Change of rhythm produces a change in the state of consciousness. It arises from the concentration of consciousness on one point and can be achieved in various ways. The breathing-exercises of *Yoga* are one way, as people breathe deeply in sleep, so, conversely, will consciously regulated breathing induce states resembling sleep. The fixing of the eyes on a shining object is another, in crystal-gazing the crystal is merely there to assist concentration, in the East a metal mirror, or even ink or water, serves the same purpose.

The state of more or less suppressed consciousness which



is known as hypnosis can be attained in this way—anybody who is capable of looking at a glittering object steadily for five minutes can try it out for himself. This condition can also be reached through the action of a monotonous sound on the ear or a stupefying scent on the nostrils, moreover, monotonous, rhythmical movement of the whole body can produce changes in the state of consciousness<sup>1</sup>

Where the state of consciousness is altered by suggestion, i.e., without the aid of external devices, that simply means that the medium's vibrations are altered by the rays emanating from the suggestor, this process takes place in the spheres of instinct and reason, principally in the former (This explains the *rapport* and "transference" between the magnetiser and the medium, and it is only natural that the sexual factor should inevitably play an important part here)

The primary function of the changes in consciousness produced in one or other of these ways is to enable all the things that repose in the unconscious to come to the surface. These things include not only individual but also universal memories. This explains knowledge of one's own past life or that of another person with whom the "medium" is in *rapport*, also clairvoyance, in so far as it relates to the past (In relation to the present, at however great a distance in space, it should need no special explanation after what has been said) Telepathy is simply being in *rapport* with the thought-sphere, which becomes possible as soon as one's own thoughts are eliminated, and the same explanation applies to visions of things going on at a distance—it is worth noting that in the case

<sup>1</sup> The effect of music on children and wild animals is well known, as is that of rocking and dancing (e.g., among Dervishes or savages), and the effect of alcohol and drugs like opium, cocaine etc. comes under the same heading. No doubt it is also possible to investigate the question, how states of consciousness can be altered, chemically—and conversely, what chemical changes in the body are produced by alterations in the state of consciousness.

of normally constituted people such visions usually occur at night when they are half-asleep.

With "occult" (in the proper sense of the word) and spiritualistic phenomena we enter a difficult territory. No good purpose is served by merely rejecting other people's experiences with contempt; on the other hand it follows from our hypothesis that one cannot accept them as absolutely convincing for anybody except the experiencing parties themselves. The individual consciousness can never be eliminated entirely—to do so would undoubtedly involve physical death, hence even in states of trance all experience of supernatural realms and their denizens remains obscured by it. Even the loftiest *Yogi*, near as he may get to pure knowledge, sees in the "beyond" something that corresponds to his own earthly conceptions. Thus the Indian sees *Brâhma*, the Christian saint Christ or Mary. Schopenhauer has said that one can believe in the mystical and yet distrust the experience of every mystic, which strikes me as perfectly true.

Most "spiritualists" go to their séances with a pre-conceived belief in the existence of the spirits of the dead, who continue their existence in other worlds—and thus actually do, in their own opinion, get into touch with them. It is senseless to deny the possibility, but their experiences can only convince those who have actually had them—and by no means all of these. At any rate the European Spiritualists' experience of the beyond is exactly in accordance with Christian ideas.

The mystics, from the medieval ones down to those of our own time, have also had their faith, based on biblical or cabbalistic tradition, and their visions and descriptions have been in accordance with it.

The modern Theosophists, who base themselves entirely on Indian doctrines (except in so far as they have subsequently combined them with European mystical tradi-

tions), have experiences which fit in with them, and often contradict those of the Spiritualists. Since the Indian doctrines are the most convincing to me personally, these experiences also come nearest to what I should expect. I do not deny that they have been experienced any more than I deny the existence of a spiritual world surrounding us and hidden from our senses—indeed, I regard it as considerably more reasonable to assume it than to deny it and to believe that nothing exists beyond what we can perceive; nevertheless, I am suspicious of anybody who proclaims his truth to me as the unadulterated, absolute truth. It seems to me perfectly plain that there have been, and are, people who are capable of hearing, seeing and experiencing things that are hidden from the majority. Undoubtedly, in the course of evolution a few people must have learnt to see and hear physically first, not everybody at once, and up to a point every artist sees, hears and feels things that are hidden from the crowd. I am convinced that certain individuals possess more perfectly developed, or even new, sense-organs, which reveal to them things of which the mass of mankind is still ignorant, because I am sure that evolution is not yet finished, and for that reason I consider insight into the future, i.e., reaction to things that are still imperceptible to the majority, perfectly intelligible, and I am, moreover, convinced that certain individuals have got nearer to a knowledge of the truth in this way.

Great advance over the past as this may be, and high as these individuals may soar above the present general level of consciousness and knowledge, the claim to have got hold of the absolute truth and thus reached the goal of evolution seems to me no less absurd and petty.

I see in it a confusion of ideas. If we think of evolution in terms of time and space, it is an everlasting process, and the still unknown spheres and their inhabitants are

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relative and a part of this evolution. Knowledge of them cannot, therefore, give us absolute truth.

On the other hand, the knowledge of truth which the Buddhist believes that he attains in the form of *nirvāṇa*, transitorily and imperfectly even in this life, but finally and completely only after physical death, seems to me perfectly intelligible. It is the absorption of the individual consciousness in the universal consciousness, not unconsciousness but all-consciousness, the overcoming of the self. This condition is timeless, beyond space and beyond all experience of all worlds—in fact, nothingness. Exploration of those worlds can bring a man no whit nearer to this condition, since, from this point of view, all things are equally near and equally distant.

This is the condition which Christians call the state of grace, in it all that we call worlds, body, matter, cannot but appear as what it is—a symbol.

I do not presume to judge whether this state is attained after physical death (either certain individuals' or everybody's), or whether it is merely the final goal of evolution, in any case, however, it seems to me incompatible with what we mean by life.

## 2.—MALE AND FEMALE

The woman in woman  
Leads forward for ever  
GOETHE

THERE IS at first sight something ridiculous in the idea of writing about the male and how it differs from the female, one feels that this problem is one for feeling, not for reason, and that it is considerably more important to experience it than to examine it under the magnifying-glass. It looks as if one was preferring a carefully constructed anatomical model to the living body because it lends itself better to purposes of demonstration. Sex stands at the very centre of human life, and dominates it to such an extent that anything approaching an objective attitude towards it presupposes a certain degree of (at least intellectual) emasculation—that is one's first, involuntary reaction whenever anybody holds forth on this subject either *viva voce* or on paper.

The terms "male" and "female" cannot, however, simply be equated with men and women considered as persons. For men and women do not differ from each other merely in their sexual functions, the notion of femininity comprises innumerable character-traits and functions which may be compared with those which are called masculine.

Moreover, while there is little to be taught dogmatically on the subject, though that little is interesting, it leaves plenty of scope for the imagination, it has the advantage of still being a highly unscientific subject.

It is remarkable how firmly mankind is convinced that men are hundred per cent. masculine, and women hundred

per cent. feminine. It is, of course, entirely untrue. Yet surely no one disputes that from the purely biological (i.e., unimpeachably rational) point of view, the child can only be produced by a mixture of masculine and feminine substance, the human being is always a mixture of male and female. It is probable that the preponderance of one substance or the other determines the sex—very possibly, the preponderance of one substance in a family has an effect on the distribution of the sexes in it. Perhaps women of a family in whose composition female elements predominate produce more daughters than sons—perhaps it works the other way round, but it is certainly not a matter of mere chance. In any case an admixture of the opposite substance is invariably present. As is well known, rudimentary female organs are to be found in men and rudimentary male organs in women, and it is significant that when sexual activity ceases—whether naturally, through old age, or artificially, through the removal of the organs, as in certain operations and in castration—these marks of the opposite sex become accentuated, thus the old woman's beard grows, the eunuch loses his man's voice. All this can certainly be demonstrated and modified chemically, and people will no doubt learn in time to control sex by giving the glands appropriate nourishment or removing or transposing them.

The hundred-per-cent. manly man and the hundred-per-cent. womanly woman are, physically speaking, nonsense

And mentally too. There is no male mentality corresponding to the male sex. Every character has its masculine and its feminine components. Chemically, physically, biologically and spiritually considered, every human being is a blend of male and female.

But either the male or the female predominates, and its efforts to find what it lacks give rise to love.

The profoundly significant legend of the hermaphrodite is well known. Man was complete in himself and fancied himself equal to the gods, so to punish him he was split into two halves—and ever since then one half has gone about looking for the other. Weiniger has put the same thing in modern form, according to him, a combination of male and female in a certain percentage ratio in one person looks for the complementary combination in another person in order to achieve totality. Where, as is usually the case, the man is predominantly masculine, he finds what he needs to complete him in a predominantly feminine woman.

This explains numerous mysteries—why fair women like dark men, small men large women, and why very energetic, masculine women fall in love with delicate, effeminate youths. Incidentally, where the mixture does not correspond to the external sexual characteristics, such people fall for others (only apparently) of their own sex.

That is one interpretation of the fable of the hermaphrodite, and it is a very true one, but there is also another.

A number of experts believe that Man really was a hermaphrodite to begin with, and that the division into two sexes is a much later product of evolution. Others again declare that, just as the evolution of the macrocosm always repeats itself in the microcosm, the history of the world in the history of each individual, so evolution advances from the sexuality of the hermaphrodite by way of homosexuality to heterosexuality. Freud teaches that the young child is auto-erotic, subsequently transferring its *erōs* to its own sex, and finally, after puberty, turning its attention to the opposite sex.

As long as one does not allow oneself to be misled by the word "sexuality", this doctrine is as inspiring as it is true. Love of one's own self gives place, first to love of

one's nearest kin and then to the recognition of kindred in the apparent stranger. Man always loves himself, but the conception of the ego gets steadily wider, thus bringing about union with what appeared to be a strange ego, and so new life is born.

Everything that remains over from *erōs* in the way of surplus emotion after the fulfilment of its sexual function, or for whatever reason is not used for this purpose, goes into the creation of those things without which Man would not be Man at all, into the creation of art and science, civilisation, ethics and metaphysics, of everything that we, so superficially and wrongly, call unselfish love, and of all that appears to us as truth, goodness or beauty.

If, therefore, the universal task of propagation, of providing for the continuation of evolution, falls to the people in whom the two elements are combined in the normal ratio, the destined task of the abnormally constituted is primarily a cultural one, that of providing for its continuation in an upward direction. Fliess's observation of an abnormally large amount of allosexual substance in artists of both sexes points in the same direction. Every great man or woman has an abnormally large amount of allosexual substance in addition to the normal amount of that proper to his own sex.

Every mental activity is an unselfish or disinterested activity transcending the limits of the self, the moment it goes beyond rational action aimed at the satisfaction of needs. In this sense, artists, scholars, teachers, saints and prophets, Cæsars and great generals are unselfish, and art, with an intuitive grasp of the truth, gives the ideal figure of Christ or Buddha hermaphrodite features.

It seems to me so obvious that it is this female element in great men which gives them their greatness, their com-



pleteness, that I cannot understand how people can look for it in an intensification of the masculine as opposed to the feminine characteristics.

Bluher<sup>1</sup> believes that the establishment of the state is the task of the male sex. In the family, he argues, the man and the woman work together, but the state, and indeed all intellectual activity (*logos*), is a purely male affair. Actually, however, the very greatest achievements in this sphere belong in many cases to men with a feminine streak in them (and homosexual inclinations). Having first given us an extremely subtle delineation of intermediate types, Bluher proceeds to declare that the purely male tasks fall to their special lot, and finally concludes that men and women are utterly and absolutely different and hence have completely different functions—the hundred-per-cent. masculine man and the hundred-per-cent. feminine woman again! How can the tasks for which the intermediate types are supposed to be specially singled out be in themselves essentially “male” as opposed to “female”?

Nothing is further from my purpose than to preach the gospel of equal rights for the sexes based on their essential equality. That gospel seems to me simply silly, its practical result is to turn Woman into a bad copy of the modern man. Every creature has the right to as much freedom as it can bear, but freedom to develop its own nature. And in practice it is certainly possible to speak of womanly women and manly men. I most definitely do not believe in the superiority of the male sex—a thoroughly childish notion, in my opinion—but I do believe in an essential difference between the sexes.

The proper business of both of them is to make these differences unite, and that is the meaning of marriage.

<sup>1</sup> *Die Rolle der Erotik in der männlichen Gesellschaft* (The Function of Sex in Male Society)

Each half demands of the other what it lacks, not what it has already.

But before we put Woman in her place with a lofty gesture, let us remember that our civilisation, which is predominantly if not completely man-made, has plunged humanity into the greatest and most tragic of catastrophes, and that it would be far better if we could learn instead of teaching.

Can we?

What, as a matter of fact, are those psychic characteristics which are generally looked upon as feminine? And are they really the same in all nations and at all times? I believe that we shall be forced to answer the second question in the negative.

I once read an article in a Suffragist paper. The authoress, a scientist with all the proper degrees, not content with showing that Woman was Man's equal, represented her as vastly superior, and supported her view with just as many and just as convincing arguments as have been adduced in support of the opposite view. She pronounced Man to be a biologically inferior variation, and garnished this statement with a wealth of learned instances. She talked about the bee-community, with its queens and drones, also about matriarchy.

Primitive society was undeniably matriarchal. Even today, when men have had it all their own way everywhere for thousands of years, I do not believe that the belief in the inferiority of women is equally prevalent, or even that it exists at all, everywhere. It is, if I am not mistaken, far more uncompromising in the Teutonic than in the Latin, Celtic, or Slav races. Among these last the position of the woman is quite different. It is she, not the man, who really has the upper hand. The Latin silently acknowledges the superiority of women in every sphere except one—namely, the intellectual. In the small

tradesman's shop and the porter's lodge the woman rules, as she does in Society and in her capacity of *hetaira*—there is still justification for the use of the word in connection with the Latins. And that is why it never occurs to her to demand "equality of rights for women", she would only stand to lose by it.

It is in England and America, Germany and Scandinavia that women have demanded equality of political rights (I have never understood why they were ever withheld from them for a moment in countries with universal suffrage if they wanted them) The superiority of the male had been so dinned into them in these countries that they thought they saw the way to happiness in imitation of his nature and actions. It seems to me obvious on the face of it that all professions ought to be open to women; but I regard it as a tragedy that modern civilisation should push them into professions which are contrary to the nature of most of them, and I am convinced that women will never attain to the position to which they are entitled along these lines.

On the other hand, I believe that the great break-down of our times is to be attributed to the supremacy of the exclusively masculine element in our civilisation, and that the missing feminine element must be added before a true civilisation can be built up.

The average woman is at once inferior and superior to the average man, in the same way that feeling as instinct is inferior to reason, but superior to it as intuition.

The purely and exclusively male element—let us remind ourselves once more that it is never wholly absent in any woman, but only present in a smaller amount—is the intellect and everything that goes with it. The intellect is that part of the human mind which is primarily directed towards the useful. Its business is to act, to satisfy practical needs, provide for food and clothing and

the necessities of life—which, of course, implies an infinity of things under modern conditions. This intellect is the specifically masculine attribute.

The specifically feminine one is not beauty but force of emotion. Beauty is merely the outward manifestation of erotic feeling, passive or active. Among the very great majority of animals the male is the more richly bedizened and beautiful specimen, the reason being that his is the active part in love (The animals' marriage-market is evidently run on different lines from that of modern society.) Even among human beings, right up to quite modern times men went in for finery and rich raiment and the cultivation of physical beauty quite as much as women, and in many cases more than they, and in the East still do. This continued till the age of rationalism, when intellect became supreme. Men's dress was then simplified, and later became hideous and grotesque. It is a symbolical expression of the fact that he despises as foreign to his nature everything to do with feeling and its expression, beauty, and leaves it to the 'inferior' female sex<sup>1</sup> It also means that the man of the present day considers the part of suitor for a woman's love beneath his dignity and that the roles have been reversed, however much the conventional fiction may be kept up

If, therefore, we insisted on abstracting the purely male element from the total human make-up and regarding man as the representative of that and nothing else, we should really be compelled to agree with my suffragette and pronounce him the inferior sex

The female is nearer to Nature than the male. Instinct is close to the animal and vegetable kingdoms. The maternal instincts and maternal love are exactly the same in human beings as in other mammals. The sight of a

<sup>1</sup> The natural impulse towards self-adornment and beauty has to be artificially suppressed in each successive generation of young men

pregnant woman or a mother feeding her baby—the look in her eyes too—has something bestial about it and also something divine. Woman's emotional reactions in love and hate are primitive, no rational arguments can affect them. Their superstitions and presentiments, which merely indicate their closer touch with Nature and more instinctive understanding of her, are unintelligible to men. Just as her menstrual cycle, pregnancy and childbirth strictly follow the periodicity of Nature (the phases of the moon), so she herself in all her moods and humours is governed not by intellectual logic but by the profounder laws of instinct.

Intuition is another feminine quality. If instinct is retrospective feeling, and therefore akin to the earlier stages of evolution, intuition is the prospective feeling which prepares the way for the coming ones.

The intuitive, clairvoyant person is the person who sees connexion and design where others see only the reign of chaos and darkness, who feels the vibrations from still undiscovered sources of light, for whom the miraculous is natural and the natural miraculous. Every great achievement of the human mind which lifts one of the veils of the great secret is a triumph of intuition, no matter whether it is to truth or to beauty that it brings us nearer, whether it belongs to the domain of science or of art. The great artist, the great physician, astronomer or natural scientist, the prophet, the saint, and all true lovers are intuitive.

Intuition is the sublime element in femininity.

This intensely feminine quality is, however, seldom met with in women outside the erotic sphere, but is found in all really great men—that is why the idea of *Fliess* to which I have referred strikes me as so convincing. It is the distinguishing mark of genius, and is found among women and men in the same proportions as genius is

The "genius" is a person who approaches human perfection, and this perfection consists in the right blend of the male and the female (why not say one-third and two-thirds, until the time comes when we can measure it?) consists in a happy spiritual harmony of instinct that has transcended reason and become intuition. That, to me, is the meaning of the conclusion of *Faust*

The genius resembles the child "Every genius", says Schopenhauer, "has something of the child in him and every child something of the genius" The psychoanalysts have taught us that behind all artistic activity—and all activity that is not confined to the strictly needful is artistic—there is a certain childishness, "infantilism" is the term they use. If one regards the intellect as the fine flower of the human mind, then the genius, the artist, is mentally retarded—he has remained a child. Like the child, he dreams and plays in a world of his own remote from reality. He is akin to the lunatics, those dreamers whose dreams completely overgrow their lives, and to Woman, the ever-childish. He is akin to all these in that he sets a higher value on the most precious part of him, his feelings, than reason, i.e., adaptation to the brutal facts of life, permits.

But "infantilism" points not merely backward but also forward to the future, psycho-analysis has only given us half the truth. The genius resembles the child in the same way as intuition resembles instinct. The child is below the rational, the genius above it. The child thinks life a dream because it is ignorant of it, the genius knows that life is a dream, a symbol, because he knows it and has seen through it. The child is not yet of either sex, the genius is of both, he is the hermaphrodite of the myth; at once man and woman, conceiving and begetting, he brings forth new and higher life, new truth and new beauty.

Maybe the genius is the symbol of the superman towards which evolution strives, the synthesis of the sexes, which were divided in order that they might develop themselves, perpetually seek one another in order to regain a unity that they can only attain for brief and fleeting moments, and produce new physical life, male and female, which in its turn repeats the longing and the quest

The hermaphrodite! Beyond seeking, beyond physical propagation and birth; conceiving, begetting, bringing forth spiritually; complete in itself, at rest, perhaps—who knows? immortal.

Fifteen hundred years ago Lao-tse wrote: "He who is a man without ceasing to be a woman, will see the truth. The eternal will flow through him, he will become a child again".

"Except ye become as little children . . . ."

### 3.—REASON AND INSANITY

EVERY generation has its conception of the world in which it believes and which it regards as truth, anything that contradicts or might upset this conception is branded as absurd, lying, heretical. A heresy, then, is a belief contrary to that of the great majority. Since, however, the belief of the age has taken to calling itself "reason" (instead of a more rational belief), the belief of the small minority has been called un-reason or insanity.

Rationalism is only prepared to believe what can be proved. Absolute proofs are, of course, unobtainable, but the average intelligent man of our own day only believes what he can see and regards no other sort of experience as constituting a valid proof. But the minority, which in fact sees something different, considers its experience every bit as valid as the majority does its own.

What the majority does not see, it calls, in ascending scale, imagination, nonsense or lunacy

Earlier epochs judged differently. In the Middle Ages the average rational man's views were based on the tenets of the Church. It was not what could be perceived by the senses but what agreed with the teaching of the Church that stood to reason in those days. The fantastic and the super-sensual were not looked upon as untrue or absurd in the least, but as divine or devilish, according to their nature—always, that is to say, as dæmonic. If a person had visions or produced phenomena which transcended the limits of every-day experience, he was either inspired by



God and the saints or possessed of the devil. He was either a saint and a prophet or a magician who had sold his soul to Satan—and opinion was often sharply divided as to which it was, e.g., in the case of Joan of Arc.

The belief that there are spirits working in and through human beings is universal in all periods before the Middle Ages and for a long while after them too; the only special contribution of the Middle Ages was the belief in the devil. Anything that displeased the Church or contradicted her teaching she branded as the work of the Evil One, and his minions, whom the rationalist would call lunatics, as he also would the saints who worked miracles, were punished with death or the rack as witches or magicians.

In their belief in the existence of super-sensual phenomena, i.e., phenomena not accessible to the ordinary man's five senses, the Middle Ages were nearer the truth than rationalism, it is only in the interpretation of them that they went wrong and fell into "superstition".<sup>1</sup>

Then rationalism came along and refuted the superstitions by arguments drawn from natural science; but that did not get rid of the phenomena themselves. They were merely given new names. Reason was now the supreme arbiter, anything that contradicted it was therefore necessarily madness. People who exhibited signs of this madness were regarded as dangerous to the community, they were treated like criminals and put in chains. It was

<sup>1</sup> In their dualistic oscillation between heaven and hell, the Middle Ages fell into some of the most extravagant aberrations. As the diabolical "miracles" were often greater and more impressive than those of the saints, a cult of the Devil grew up, which was a relapse into the primitive evocation of evil spirits—an inverted Catholicism (brilliantly described by Huysmans in his *A rebours* and his *La-bas*), with black masses, Judas-worship and all the rest of it, in which the ceremonies were conducted wherever possible by consecrated priests and with consecrated objects. This business was still flourishing in Louis XIV's time, and persists in its derivatives right down to our own day.

only with the progress of medical science that people came to look upon them as ill, lunatics were not released from their chains till the eighteenth century.

It is a very simple matter to determine what is insanity when one is firmly convinced of one's own right reason. And the world in general is so convinced. It has a naive belief in the "normal" (which nobody has ever seen): diversions from it, if small, are called eccentric, but if they are considerable and if the person acts according to his divergent convictions, the world calls him a lunatic. Nevertheless some lingering doubts about the rightness of its own judgment seem to have remained with it until Materialism succeeded in producing a scientific foundation for the popular view. Therewith a new "age of faith" began.

Madness was pronounced to be a disease of the brain: thought took place in the brain, if the brain was ill, the thought would be irrational, mad. The various brain-centres were studied in the hopes of localising every mental activity in some definite centre. If a centre was damaged the mental function depending on this centre would be disturbed. Nobody will deny the connexion between the brain and mental life, but it cannot be explained quite so simply. Quite apart from the fact that no opinion was expressed how the brain "produces" mental activity, where is the proof that the brain is the cause of thought at all, and not the other way round? No such proof exists, of course, because there is a constant interaction of mind and matter, in which our reason is forced to regard the non-rational cause as primary and the material phenomenon as its effect. In the beginning was Desire.

It is theoretically indifferent—nor can science prove anything either way—whether spirit or matter is taken as

primary (the Spirit properly speaking, *Brāhman*, does not come into the question), as they form a unity. But practically it was of great importance in this case. If people had continued in the belief that mental diseases are always due to modifications in the stuff of the brain, they could never have come to realise that they may exist without any such modification, may have a mental cause, in fact. Many, if not most, mad people, as Jung has shown, have perfectly normal brains. Their illness really is only mental, their minds are disordered, but their bodies and their brains are perfectly healthy.

We owe this great advance to the discovery of psycho-analysis. Psycho-analysis began with the interpretation of dreams, in connection with which it discovered transposition and symbolisation. Suppose a thought arises which is disagreeable and embarrassing to the ego or personality as a whole, causing it to reproach itself and feel pricks of conscious<sup>ness</sup>; in order to evade the conflict, it is relegated to the sub-conscious. If the repression is successful, the person remains quite well, the thought only venturing to come to the surface in dreams, and even then not in its pure form but with its theme transposed and symbolised. If, however, the suppression is not successful, the thought comes up again into consciousness together with its associations in the form of a "complex", and the conflict between the complex and his total personality makes the person ill. It is the reappearance of the complex in a transposed and symbolised form (in the pure form it would be intolerable to consciousness) that gives these delusions their appearance of being absolutely unintelligible and insane.

From the medical point of view, the most important result of these researches was, of course, the new therapeutic possibilities which they opened up. If the psycho-analyst can bring the complex in its original form, purged of all

transposition and symbolisation, back into the patient's consciousness, a cure becomes possible.<sup>1</sup> The literature of the subject contains numerous examples which go to prove that the wildest and most incomprehensible-seeming delusions may be traced back to quite simple every-day conflicts.

But over and above its medical significance, the insight into madness thus gained is of the greatest general significance also. Madness has been explained and is no longer an unintelligible phenomenon. The same psychic forces and conflicts which in their extreme form lead to the delusions of madness, have their part in the psychic life of the normal person. Here, too, Nature makes no jumps, there is only a gradual transition from the dreams—the ordinary “perfect absurd” dreams—of the healthy man to the exaggerations and obsessions of the neurotic and the apparently quite meaningless delusions of the inmates of lunatic-asylums. When dreams, which are a sort of mental digestion, are not sufficient to keep the psychic system clear, an independent complex, an idea with a life of its own, forms and sometimes becomes so strong that it overpowers the original personality, which identifies itself with it, e.g., in megalomania, or it may be felt as entirely distinct from the self and personified as a friend or as an enemy, e.g., in persecution-mania. To my mind, there is something liberating for the whole human race in the discovery of this intelligible element in apparent chaos.

<sup>1</sup> I must confess that I find it difficult to believe in the contention that the mere fact of the patient's becoming conscious of the conflict once more is in itself enough to cure him. If that is so, either the conflict must be so far back that, when grasped in its pure form, it no longer seems acute, or the cure is based on the doctor's suggestive powers (which can never be eliminated) or the patient's faith in the doctor, as the case may be. A real cure can only be effected, I believe, by a process of psychic regeneration which is made possible by the clearing up of the conflict, but is carried out by the patient himself with the help of the doctor, who plays a part akin to that of the father confessor.

## II

But to what event in the life of the psyche, what process, do dreams, obsessions and delusions owe their existence? "Dissociation" seems to me the most likely explanation.

Our consciousness of our individuality is based on association. Our thinking depends on the association of present with past experience, and what we call the self is the sum of all these associations and memories. We refer them all to an unchanging centre and regard them as a unity which obeys the will, the reason of this centre, which we call our "self".

When the self wishes it, so it is supposed, the muscles move—one's body walks, lies or stands. And one's thoughts obey the self too, I am the master of my thoughts, and can switch them on or off and direct them at will. Body and mind obey the will of the self. Such is the general notion, it is a beautiful and simple one, but it is superficial and false—a partial truth at best.

Many, if not most, of our bodily functions are automatic, outside the control of consciousness and independent of the will. The most important of them—breathing, the circulation of the blood, the digestive process—come under this category. All the bodily functions which are common to us and the vegetable kingdom, and are early products of evolution, are regulated automatically by instinct, and these are the most important for our physical lives. Incidentally, the ability to bring these functions back into the control of the conscious will is the basis of many of the "miracles" of Oriental fakirs.

Our minds are also the very reverse of obedient to our wills. In many cases we do not possess our thoughts but are possessed by them—there lies the beginning of the path that ends in madness. Our instincts, hunger and

love and hate, are stronger than our rational "wills". Everybody knows that hunger, love or hatred can drive people frantic. How easily the reason of all civilised humanity can be overwhelmed by these instincts, how little we are capable of controlling our feelings and how completely they, on the contrary, control us—of that the years of war and revolution have given enough proof to satisfy anybody.

Most justly do people speak of "mass-psychosis".

The truth is that people who can control their ideas, who can think about what they want to think about and when they want, are extremely rare. The overwhelming majority of people cannot, they are at the mercy of outside ideas which they are powerless to keep at bay, or else, if they have ideas of their own, they are slaves to them instead of masters. Their mental stability depends entirely on no single one of these ideas getting absolute control. There is a point at which an idea becomes stronger than the self, and there madness begins.

The overpowering complex of ideas fights with the self for the upper hand, and according to the issue of the struggle the person is counted among the sane or the insane. If the complex wins and becomes independent it ceases to be felt by the self as part of the personality. It now no longer belongs to its associations, having awakened through dissociation from the content of consciousness to an independent life of its own.<sup>1</sup>

There are innumerable kinds and gradations of dissociation. The wish that has come to life in the dissociated complex, and whose negative form is fear, fulfils itself in all kinds of ways—voices are heard, visions are seen. If

<sup>1</sup> This is also the rational explanation of the belief in demons. These psychically abnormal (or super-normal) individuals really were "possessed". They were possessed by their own dissociated conceptions which, in accordance with their general outlook, they personified.

the dissociated complex becomes stronger than the self, the latter takes a back seat and the patient identifies himself with the complex. Instead of seeing his ideal creation, he now *becomes* it, he becomes Cæsar or Napoleon or God. His original self disappears altogether or only shows itself in his "lucid moments". The same principal will also explain those remarkable cases of "multiple personality" in which one person is split up into several persons who know nothing of each other and are only recognisable as a unity to the outside observer, not to the person himself. Numerous cases of this sort, some of them incredibly complicated, have been vouched for and investigated by doctors, and the theme has also played an important part in literature, especially in its simplest Jekyll-and-Hyde form.

Whether they are simple, as in the most commonplace dreams, or whether they are infinitely complex, all these phenomena are based on the principle of dissociation

### III

To postulate a principle is not enough, one must also try to understand what actually takes place. What is the mechanism of dissociation? In some way or other a part of the content of consciousness gets withdrawn from the conscious control and relegated to the unconscious, by which it is then regulated automatically—that is to say, without or even against the person's will. Thus in automatic writing, for example, the movements of the hand and arm are not under the control of the conscious will. In hypnosis a condition is artificially produced in which the will of the person hypnotised is put out of action: his body and mind no longer obey the commands of his reason, are indeed withdrawn from his conscious control

altogether. The same thing applies to the state of trance, the conscious is put out of action while the unconscious is at work.

We have, in fact, to abandon two beliefs—first, that only our “conscious” and our intellect are able to issue orders to our bodies and minds, and secondly, that the brain is the sole centre of our entire mental life. In my opinion the key to this problem is contained in what the Indians have always taught, namely, that our sympathetic nervous system is the centre of the unconscious and controls our instinctive life (the word “sympathetic” must, I think, be taken only in its widest sense here) That this system controls the automatic functions (in the ordinary sense of the word) is a matter of common knowledge. We must go further and recognise that it is the seat of the unconscious.

We have only one control for our thoughts, but several for our consciousness. The intellect and full or waking consciousness are directed from the brain, instinct and the unconscious by the sympathetic nerve-system—and intuition from some third centre, no doubt. Consciousness and the intellect work under the control of the brain by means of association. Dissociation means that some psychic process has been withdrawn from the control of the brain and put under the sympathetic control, it thereby disappears from consciousness and becomes incomprehensible and incredible to the intellect.

What we call our “self” is only that part of our personality which is represented by our brain, intellect or consciousness, it is only our individuality. Hence we wrongly feel that what lies outside it is no part of our personality. Instead of the will’s sending out rays through the brain in the form of intellect, in order to produce the desired vibrations, physical or mental, it sends them through the sympathetic centres in this case, in the form of instinct, and



these vibrations are felt in the sympathetic, the emotional, sphere.

Eliminating the brain-vibrations and setting up the sympathetic ones destroys the consciousness of self-hood and puts the individual in touch or *rappor*t with the universe. He then lives in another world, which seems to him the only true one, and it is only with the reawakening of the intellect (or through its co-operation when it has not been eliminated quite completely) that doubt, contradiction and confusion arise.

Such, I believe, is the relation of the madman to his dissociated complex. Being dependent on the sub-conscious, in the early stages it appears to him to be outside his ego, like the dream personages invented by us and split off from our egos. Later on, if cerebral control is completely eliminated, the dissociated complex is then identified with the ego.

Dissociation is a permanent trance-state affecting a larger or smaller portion of the content of a person's consciousness. The madman is in a permanent state of trance.

#### IV

Phenomena seldom observed appear incomprehensible and in order to explain them one has to cast one's net very wide and have recourse to seemingly far-fetched hypotheses. In reality, however, the most familiar phenomena are equally baffling and equally difficult to explain. Madness is no more incomprehensible than the workings of the imagination in general, the hypothesis of dissociation is essential to the explanation of either.

The kinship between madness and genius has often been insisted on—not to mention the attempts to equate them!—and so has that between the genius and the child. This

kinship lies in the fact that all three types have vigorous imaginations, and are able to retire, temporarily or permanently, from reality into a world of their own creation.

The activity of the imagination is based on the power of dissociation, and it is in their unusually strong power of dissociation that the madman, the genius and the child resemble one another.

Imagination, or the power of dissociation, is the capacity for getting outside the limits of one's own personality, enlarging one's ego and forgetting or overcoming it, together with the phenomenal world, which is, of course, based on the individual's conception. In fact, the power of dissociation is the capacity for self-unconsciousness.

The infant is still unconscious of itself. We cannot, of course, peer into its psyche nor have we any recollections going back to that age, but it is an established fact that the child only discovers itself long after it recognises, and names, its parents, its nurse, and objects with which habit has made it familiar. And even then it usually refers to itself by the name by which other people address it, it does not say "I" until much later. That moment marks the beginning of its rational life properly speaking, till then it lives in a world of imagination which is unintelligible to grown-ups, although the poet and the visionary can enter into it.

Boys and girls divide their time between real life and play. In their play they live in a world of fantasy, which is often more real and important to them than reality. To the little girl her doll does not represent a child, it *is* a child. How utterly unimportant the counterfeiting of reality is here! The poor child plays with a couple of rags wrapped round a stick and a potato for a head, with just as much conviction as the rich child with a china doll with real hair which can say "Papa" and "Mama". The carpet is the dry land and the polished floor the sea.

The children are the robbers, heroes, princesses or wives and mothers that they wish to be. A child can separate itself from its ego and transform itself into someone else for any time it likes, indeed it is difficult to determine where reality and its own ego end for the child, and whether they or the products of its imagination are more real to it. Children instinctively recognise the unreality of the real world and the truth of the world of feeling.

In the child the power of dissociation is not yet entirely under the control of reason, even though the dissociation may not be permanent. With the growth of reason the imagination decays in most people and often disappears altogether—a result which Education is wont to regard as a great feather in its cap!

The genius, and indeed the artist as such, has the power of dissociating himself and returning to his ego, to the control of reason, at will. The artist is an artist primarily in virtue of his power of dissociation and of his capacity for controlling it.

The most obvious example of this is the actor, whose whole art is based on the power of exchanging his own ego for a strange one at will, without abandoning intellectual control.<sup>1</sup>

But if it comes to that, all artistic activity is based on the power of getting away from one's own ego, of projecting oneself into other people and the external world, incorporating them in oneself, and creating them anew.

The creative writer gets outside his own skin in order to penetrate into the emotional world around him. But

<sup>1</sup> Incidentally we often find actors crossing the line which separates their art from the delusions of the madman. The actor easily gets to identify himself with his part. Often the effect is merely grotesque, but there is a great danger in this: thus the celebrated English comic actor, Penley, creator of *Charley's Aunt*, went mad after playing in this brilliant piece of nonsense for two years without a break. He imagined he *was* Charley's Aunt.

after dissociation comes association, for reason sets those limits to feeling which we call form.

-- Shakespeare becomes Lear or Lady Macbeth in order to conceive them, he becomes Shakespeare again in order to give them form and life. The genius controls his enormous power of dissociation in accordance with his will and the requirements of the situation

Here—apart from his creative power, which we cannot regard as the decisive criterion, since there are great artists who cannot create but only feel—lies the difference between the genius and the madman. Here is the frontier, it is frequently crossed and many of the greatest dwell on the borderline

With the madman dissociation is no longer under the control of the ego but independent, overgrowing and finally strangling the original personality, so that the madman becomes what his imagination desires or fears—Cæsar or Napoleon, the Devil or God.

## V

Dissociation is thus no exceptional phenomenon, in certain types and all children it is a normal psychic process. But even this is not final. Dissociation is a device common to all human beings just as association is.

The faculty of dissociation is nothing more or less than the faculty of feeling, just as the faculty of association conditions thought. Our mental life is built up by the interplay of the two. All sympathy and all love would be impossible and inexplicable without dissociation, as would consciousness of self-identity without association.

Man oscillates between the desire to incorporate the world in his ego and the desire to pour out his ego into the world, to get outside his own skin, between indi-

vidualism and universalism, and does not see that this antithesis is an illusion, and that he can only satisfy his feeling of self-hood and enlarge his personality by loving the not-himself and sacrificing himself. For the self can only find its fulfilment in the not-self

But for the faculty of dissociation, Man would be what he imagines himself to be—a completely separate and isolated individual, and would be cut off from all relations with other individuals and the world. That faculty makes him part of the universe, and he is exactly as great as his power of dissociation, his sympathy and his love.

## VI

The whole of evolution may be regarded as the development of this faculty of dissociation. It is, in a sense, a progressive breaking-up of matter, all the way from the minerals to Man. Matter becomes gradually subtler, less closely packed, more capable of vibrating. It is a matter of common knowledge that the vegetable is distinguished from the mineral, the animal from the vegetable and Man from the animals by a greater freedom of movement, and the same distinction no doubt applies to the matter of which they are composed. Increased freedom of movement turns matter into spirit and that is how consciousness and feeling develop.

Evolution has not ceased with the arrival of Man, but goes on inside the human race, developing new capacities for vibration, new powers of dissociation, first in isolated individuals, then in the whole race.

I spoke a short time ago of the creative writer's "getting outside his own skin" in order to penetrate into the world of feeling. I believe that the phrase may be taken quite literally; that the looser texture of matter and

increased sensitiveness to vibrations which are found in certain individuals make it easier for the "emotional matter" to come out of them, and that this matter can be controlled and given plastic form by the will, either at the individual's own wish, as with the genius, or in obedience to unconscious wishes, as with medial personalities, or at the command of another, in hypnosis or artificially produced somnambulism.<sup>1</sup>

What we need to acquire—and I am convinced that certain individuals have acquired it—is the power to incorporate this faculty in our consciousness and thus to make use of it when we want. The will must command, the "emotional body" obey, get into touch with the desired object, come back and submit its report to the intellect, the vibrations must be incorporated in the conscious memory. That seems to me no more fantastic than the fact that we can make ourselves understood to each other and even (perhaps more so) to our dogs by a look.

This looser texture of matter, which facilitates the egress of the spiritual bodies, seems to me to be implicit in the power of dissociation and to explain the "nervous" disposition. I believe that such people are in this respect akin to children and hence possessed of a greater capacity for emotion. I believe that they are, for instance, incomparably more affected by physical motion of every kind than normal people are, with the result that they are inclined to giddiness (sea-sickness, too, I should expect) and that colours, sounds, movement—in a word, vibrations of all kinds—act on them with a quite disproportionate intensity. (This has been established in the case of ill

<sup>1</sup> The experiments of A. de Rochas, described in his book *Die Ausscheidung des Empfindungsvermögens* (The Elimination of the Sensory Powers), are extraordinarily interesting in this connection, though I find the conclusions he draws from them far from convincing.

people also, though only too seldom borne in mind.) With such people a relatively slight shock will lead to a serious and lengthy, sometimes a permanent, dissociation of a smaller or larger part of the emotional body, just as a very big shock will with the most normal people (as was observed on all sides during the war), and give rise to delusions in the process.

When a part of the ego is thus dissociated, detached from the rest, consciousness ceases to recognise it as part of the ego, and this is called having delusions. The detachment may well be a physical fact, however, and if that is so and this hypothesis has a foundation in truth, then the doctor who can admit to his patient in the early stages of his "delusion" that his feelings are true, and can explain them to him, may achieve more in that way than by arguments addressed to the reason, and if he wants to cure him by suggestion, he will know what to suggest.

And perhaps it will be recognised that there is some reason in madness and some madness in reason—in other words, that they have something to learn from each other.

#### 4.—GOOD AND EVIL

THE notions of good and evil are mutually interdependent, like light and shade. We can only focus things at all by creating antitheses, whether in the domain of the physical or of the spiritual. There was a time, so the legend has it, when the human race knew not good and evil—that was in the Garden of Eden—just as they are still unknown to the infant

It was only with the development of the intellect that the antithesis appeared in consciousness

That is to say, good and evil are relative, not absolute. Every age—in individualistic ages almost every individual—has his own interpretation of these conceptions, which hardens into a convention, till a new age comes along and finds a new interpretation, a new morality. Nothing and nobody in this world is “beyond good and evil”—only the Absolute is that—but it is true that great minds are invariably in advance of the moral conventions of their age, for it is their mission to provide the new interpretation. No matter where he places the good—no man can get on without the idea of the good and the effort to attain it; life would become too senseless.

Greatly as conceptions of good and evil may differ, it seems to me no less wrong to postulate a fundamental contradiction between the conceptions ruling at different times and among different peoples. The differences are superficial, they concern the form not the essence of the matter. Their interchange is not purely arbitrary, but constitutes a process of growth.

Once childhood is passed, Man knows everywhere and



at all times that he *ought*. He calls "good" what he believes he ought to do and it is about this "what", not about the "that", that his view differs according to his times, race and character. His duty differs at different times, but at bottom it is always the same. What is good for the child is not good for the man, but it is good for both of them to be good.

Man is part of the evolutionary scheme, hence it is his business to grow in and with it, i.e., to be continually overcoming himself. Whatever hinders him in this task is evil, whatever helps him is good, hence yesterday's good may be today's evil.

What is no longer good enough is evil, evil is merely the less good. We expect absolute obedience of the child, but we despise it in the adult unless it is voluntary—what was good is no longer good enough. Evil is what impedes Man's development. Man's duty, his "ought", is to develop his ego to the highest possible pitch, which purpose is best served by obedience in the child and assumption of responsibility in the adult. It is Man's privilege that he is at liberty to carry out this duty or to neglect it, that he can, if he will, play a creative part in evolution. It is because Man is free to do evil that he wills the good, that he believes in "God".

A Man is to develop his ego, but not at the expense of others—that is his problem. The "struggle for existence" only holds good within certain limits. The stronger certainly preys on the weaker, the cat eats the mouse—but not other cats. Within the species laws, instinctive prohibitions which mitigate the struggle, are respected. It is a far cry from the primitive instinct of nutrition, for which everything exists simply to be swallowed, and the level which the human race has reached today. The position can, I think, be summed up by saying that the eternal

instinct to enlarge the ego, which is the vital instinct itself, is becoming a seeing instead of a blind one. It is gradually learning how the self really does become larger, but it learns very slowly and is constantly forgetting what it has once learnt.

Primitive man is a cannibal. He believes that another ego can only contribute to the enlargement of his own if he incorporates it in his own body, by which means he doubtless imagines that he possesses himself of the spiritual qualities of the dead person. He regards cannibalism as good. In the course of evolution cannibalism gets sublimated into love for mankind, and the primitive conception of the instinct of self-preservation as a nutritive, and therefore destructive, instinct now becomes "evil", the thing that lurks in the background, the source of all the vices. Man has to learn that everything outside his ego is not there to be destroyed and eaten by him—one has but to watch any child to be reminded how difficult that lesson is. Beginning with what is nearest to him, he first learns that it is wicked, a sin, to take human life. The sanctity of human life, the "thou shalt not kill", is the foundation of all morality. This prohibition begins, of course, by applying only to a man's nearest kin, and gradually extends to the tribe, and the nation, till Christianity (the whole "civilised" world was Christian in the year 1914<sup>1</sup>) teaches that one may not even kill one's enemy but must love him, while Hinduism extended the ban on killing even to the animal world, in which it was more successful than the Western world was with its prohibitions. Man has to learn that all life is sacred, and the prohibitions of religion, in compelling him to let others live, at the same time lead him to realise not merely that their death is of no advantage to him, but that their life and their advantage are also his own.

After that the enemy is no longer killed, but made into

a slave; later on people realise that work done under compulsion is worthless and become reconciled to their enemies, and then it dawns on a few—a very few—that there are no enemies.

The same process of development also takes place in the relations of the sexes, here, too, the primitive element, the destructive, nutritional instinct, retires into the background and becomes "evil". It is the origin of most, if not quite all, of the so-called "perversions", and the close connection between physical love and death points back to it. All evil can be reduced to the primitive.

The successes of evolution are never for one moment universally secure, indeed it would be truer to say that there is a constant risk of a relapse into a more primitive state. Anything that threatens Man with a danger of this kind he feels to be evil, and religion and the law do their best to shield him from it by commandments. Next to the commandment of the sanctity of life come those relating to the sanctity of love and of property, the burden of all this teaching is that "thine" cannot and must not become "mine" by physical incorporation, its constant theme the rights of the other fellow, of the not-self as against the self.

Man today is the heir of many revolutionary achievements, were it not so he would not be a human being but a monster. He comes into the world with a certain capital of "good", thus no child needs to be taught that it must not kill its parents, it knows that already. On the other hand, how deep-rooted the tendency, e.g., to cruelty and to torturing of animals is in children, and how difficult to eradicate! The child has to learn that this is wicked, and it can only learn it through love. Man may be called "naturally" good or bad with equal justification; he is neither the one nor the other, he is less bad (or better, as the case may be) and he is not good enough. And he is

in constant danger of relapsing into the primitive, the evil, and becoming an animal once more. To prevent that is—or rather might have been—the task of civilisation.

The self is to develop itself, and it has to find out the right way of doing so. The incorporation of the not-self, whether by murder, robbery or theft, or merely by oppression, is the wrong way, for it does not lead to the goal. The personality is only enlarged by what it loves. We are as big as what we can love, but when we love something we do not want to possess it, we want to give ourselves to it. We are absolutely incapable of being real "egoists", and can only achieve happiness—i.e., the feeling of enhanced personality—by sacrificing something of ourselves. Everybody does this, and if he finds no human being to love he loves animals, objects or ideas and sacrifices himself for them.

Evil is a stage in the process of development from individualism to universalism, it is at any given time the thing that stands in the way of further progress towards universalism. Evil is the false conception of the self and its interests, and in proportion as this conception gets nearer the truth, what was good only a short time ago becomes inadequate: thus yesterday's good is today's evil. So long as the self regards itself as entirely discrete, it tries to develop itself at the expense of the not-self, but the more it recognises the not-self as akin to and bound up with itself, the more it strives to reach its goal by projecting itself into its fellows: it is now on the right way, the way of love.

"Good" is only another word for the thing that draws the self to the not-self, attraction: good is sympathy, friendship, love. Evil is the thing that keeps the self and the not-self apart, repulsion: it is enmity and hatred. But people only hate what they fear, and only fear what they

do not understand. All evil is, in the last analysis, based on fear, and fear on lack of understanding. All good is based on love, and love on understanding, on a recognition of kinship. In proportion as understanding increases in the course of evolution, fear turns to love, evil to good.

The demands of ethics are therefore entirely rational; for the good, being the true, is also the useful, not, however, what "egoism" thinks useful, but what "altruism" regards as worth while. Egoism and altruism are not antithetical, because the individual and the universal are not. Altruism is the true, properly understood egoism, because the true ego is not the little individuality but the universe, in which the former is included like a drop in the ocean.

Just as the consciousness of self-identity—that is to say, the knowledge that certain physical and mental functions are connected, have a common centre and constitute a unity—is only the preliminary to universalism, to the realisation of the unity of all things, so also is evil only an intermediate stage on the road to good.

To ask why evil exists is the same as asking why evolution, movement, life exist. We do not know the answer, being ourselves a product of this evolution, a part of this life. It is our reason that asks the question, our feeling knows that evil is there to be overcome and that it is its duty to overcome it. The movement which we call life is based on dissatisfaction, struggle, pressure and counter-pressure, action and reaction, the development towards good on evil.

Our reason divides the universe into the self and the not-self. Therewith life and consciousness begin for us. The self wants to live, to preserve itself, and sees danger in the not-self. Thus arises fear, which expresses itself in hate. The instinct of nutrition is only the excuse which

the hate born of fear finds for itself; that hate far exceeds what is needful, it is an instinct of destruction. The self must and shall develop itself, it can only do so by including the not-self in itself, and as it gradually comes to understand the identity of all life, it finds the right way. Fear turns to love, the impulse to destruction into the impulse to self-sacrifice, and the human sacrifice of primitive religion becomes the sacrifice of the Redeemer in Christianity. Everything that helps Man forward along this path is good, everything that thrusts him back evil.

## II

This is not, however, the final and complete answer to our question. It is not that, because the consciousness of self-identity, which only arises with reason, does not belong to the earliest stages of evolution. Before this stage of apparent differentiation there is a stage of unity. Before consciousness lies the unconscious, beyond it the universal consciousness, before intellect instinct, beyond it intuition. Individualism has universalism before and universalism beyond it, two spheres resembling one another, and it is they that form the last and greatest antithesis.

Everything that preceded Man's existence as a human being, the animal, the plant, the mineral, slumbers in his unconscious. Just as the child's life reaches back beyond its birth, so the life of the human spirit reaches back beyond humanity. From this point of view individuality is only the coping-stone of a building, a single summit projecting from a common range which is firmly rooted in the earth. Not only the universalism that transcends the individual and leads to the superhuman, but also the universalism of the sub-human, the animal, vegetable and mineral worlds, is common to all human beings.

Whatever takes Man back to the sub-human is for him the deadliest of all evils, which he covers with the veil of secrecy and buries deep down in the unconscious. That, to me, is the real meaning of the Oedipus-complex of the psycho-analysts. It is the shirking of the duty to go forward, the rejection of individuality; incest is retrograde universalism. Sodomy and similar bestial phenomena, which we look upon with horror as worse than wicked, inhumanly revolting, are similar relapses. The result of the Western world's regarding Man as distinct from Nature is that Western knowledge of good and evil, and therewith Western morality and ethics, go no deeper than individualism—they date, in fact, from the age of individualism—and do not extend to the region of the unconscious. The evil they fight against is only mistaken egoism, which wants to return to the discrete self at enmity with the world. The West, our whole outlook in fact, only knows the division into good and evil. The story of creation begins with the Fall before that was Paradise.

India went deeper, and formed three concepts where we have only two, the Indians have a concept and a word for something that is profounder, older, more dangerous than wickedness. The nature of Man is threefold and his feelings and actions are of three orders, they spring from "sloth", "passion", or "equilibrium". "Sloth" is lower than passion (or wickedness), it is the Satanic, the accursed thing, only for the slothful is there no "beyond", no life in *Brāhman*.

"Equilibrium" has found the way to truth, passion seeks the truth, even if along the wrong paths, but sloth shirks the duty of life, the duty of movement, struggle and search, and therefore its condign punishment is to be excluded from evolution; the slothful man sinks below the animal, below the vegetable, below the mineral, into nothingness. It is only in this way that the real meaning

of evil becomes intelligible: this evil is the opposite of the good, as death is the negation of life. It is forbidden to Man on pain of death, and no living person is here beyond good and evil. Everyone, however, has all three qualities in him, it is his business to transform the two lower into the highest.

### III

The East did not wait for rationalism to tell it that what human beings call good and evil, God and the devil, are creations of the human mind, and that Man, in following the teaching of the religions, is only following the dictates of his own nature, but the East did not draw the inference from this piece of knowledge that these dictates are or could be at variance with Nature. To the East, as to the most recent thought, Man is a part of Nature, his commandments are her commandments, his good and evil are her good and evil, but both of them, Man and Nature alike, are merely manifestations of the universal Spirit, whose commandments they follow. The commandments which Man creates for himself are "divine commandments", because Man is a part of the divine

These commandments are always subservient to the same truth: what we call evolution is the growing knowledge of the spiritual truth, the emancipation of the spirit from matter, which conceals its true nature from it. What we call the good is the thing that is relatively near to truth.

The ultimate realities are beyond reason, they cannot be demonstrated, they must be believed. Life cannot be proved, nor can evolution. Hence it cannot be proved either that life has a meaning, that its movement is a progress, or that love is the way to truth. Yet only those who regard reason as the supreme arbiter will find it hard to



acquiesce in this; feeling needs no such proof: life does not need to have movement proved to it, nor love the necessity of goodness. No matter what a man believes or does not believe, he follows the movement, the wave of life, of which he is merely a fraction. No matter what he regards as good or evil, he will not thereby delay the evolution of good from evil. When sloth had to be got rid of, individuality seemed to Man the supreme goal, when the time came for individuality to be overcome, he began to long for unity. What he had formerly called evil he afterwards called good and later still evil again, just as the individual does in the course of his own life. The judgment of mankind resembles that of the individual man. Obedience and subjection, which are the child's good, are the youth's evil, he has to develop his individuality, but when he becomes a man, he has to overcome it once more of his own free will in the service of the family, the community or the idea. The human being and the human race have constantly to be transcending themselves, passing on from evil to good.

At our present level of understanding, universalism appears as the highest conceivable aim, the absolute good. Whether it is that nobody can determine. The nearer Man approaches to the absolute, the more it retreats, what looked like the top of the mountain turns out to be only a shoulder.

It may be that each individual is destined to become a universe, or it may be that all individuals are to form a single universal personality or "earth spirit". Perhaps there is to be a synthesis of human perfection with the quite contradictory perfection of the insects, perhaps the modes of being of the various planets are to unite . . . there is no limit to such possibilities. But wherever the way may lead, we shall always do right to call what helps us on this way good and what hinders us evil.

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Looked at from the end, all becoming was imperfect, evil at every point; looked at from the beginning, it is at every point obligatory, progressive and good. But in the timelessness of the Absolute, which our reason cannot grasp, it is perfect; for to the Absolute good and evil are one and the same. Evolution is like a tune. Right to the end it is becoming, and yet it is at all times perfect—discords produce the final harmony, which yet was always there.

We are not at the end of the tune.

## 5.—LIFE AND DEATH

DEATH came into the world with the Fall, says the Bible: that is to say, the awakening of the consciousness of self-identity brought with it a sense of the perishable nature of the self

The individual has never been able to come to terms with this notion; at all times and in all places Man tries to find proofs of his own immortality. It has never been proved, yet the belief in it was universal until a short time ago. It was Materialism that first put an end, or tried to put an end, to it. Since Materialism regarded the spirit as a product of the body, the life of the spirit was bound, in its view, to cease with the demonstrable dissolution of the body in physical death. This doctrine is, however, no more capable of proof than that of "everlasting life", and no better founded either. Nothing disappears in Nature, it only changes, and there is no reason to assume that the spirit ceases to be active after the death of the body. Matter is just as much and just as little illusory as spirit, they form a unity, and is it not more reasonable to suppose that the spirit destroys the body which is no longer serviceable in order to create new forms than to suppose that it is created by the body and, when the latter is transmuted after death, disappears without leaving a trace?

However that may be, the human race goes on raising the eternal question. The experience of many thousands of years has failed to reconcile it to the idea of death.

Man objects to dying, though his reason tells him that his ego is not constructed to last for ever, and even if he were still doubtful in his own case, it is clear enough to him that the majority of his fellow beings are not fitted for eternal life in their present form!

The difficulty lies in the fact that Man identifies his personality with his consciousness of self-identity. He knows, or thinks he knows, that this consciousness is a function of the brain in his body and therefore disintegrates with it, and a continued existence without consciousness seems to him equivalent to death.

Individuality is mortal, but does it not die daily? Is it not constantly changing and becoming? Is the child the grown man, or the man in the prime of life the grey-beard? And even supposing it to have remained unchanged, is life without consciousness of self death, is not life of such a kind well known even in this world? I do not believe that consciousness of self goes on for ever, I believe that it comes to an end, because we know its beginning. Infants have no consciousness of self nor, in all probability, have animals, it disappears or diminishes in hypnosis or madness, and, most important of all, it disappears universally in sleep. A good third of our lives is passed without consciousness of self, yet we call that unconscious life sleep, not death.

It is a prejudice that only conscious life is life, just as it is a prejudice to take the small part of our consciousness that we can know in fully waking life for the whole, or to equate our intellects with our spirits. Of course, reason regards life without self-consciousness as no life, because reason and self-consciousness are inextricably bound up together. If one regards personality merely as the sum of those things which reason includes under the "self", i.e., as individuality, then the belief in its survival is an illusion. But does Man really desire his individuality to

go on existing for ever? In what state is it to live eternally? At the age at which it normally dies? In everlasting incompleteness? I do not believe that we really desire that. It is (as Hermann Keyserling shows in his admirable work *Unsterblichkeit*<sup>1</sup>) a wrong interpretation of the belief in immortality, just as individualism is a wrong interpretation of life. Individuality, alike in the life of each one of us and in the evolution of the world, has a beginning, and must also have an end. This end is in all probability death. Its beginning is not the moment of conception, not even birth, but a much later point. We live before we acquire individuality, the consciousness of self-identity, and we shall live after we have lost it. Though our individuality may disappear at death, our personality, our entelechy as Goethe calls it, outlasts it. It has nothing to fear from death.

All life is afraid of death. That is not, however, our only feeling towards death, we desire and long for it much more than we fear it, only our individuality fears it, our true personality never ceases to long for it; individuality is the great obstacle in the way of our true personality, which desires its disappearance.

Man is not satisfied by his individuality, he is always wanting to get beyond it. It is only his reason that teaches him to fear death, his feeling longs for it. Man only finds happiness in the conquest of individuality, and the complete conquest of individuality is death. Love is nothing but that same conquest, through it interest is withdrawn from the self, the happiness of the beloved is preferred to one's own, individuality sacrificed to the success of an idea—and always a creative idea, be it posterity, the race, the nation, or a work of art, only then does a man feel happy

<sup>1</sup> Immortality

The highest bliss to which a human being can attain is called ecstasy, and ecstasy is a temporary death, a temporary cessation of self-consciousness, in which individuality is overcome, the self fused with the not-self, it is death, and it creates new life.

Ecstasy is the state in which things that are apparently distinct are fused into a unity—whether it is the ecstasy of physical love, which makes a man and woman one flesh, or the ecstasy of the mystic, in which the individual becomes one with the universe, with the divine, as he regards it, or the ecstasy into which the work of art sends the artist at the moment of its conception and the rest of the world when it is born. The state of trance and its kindred states, whether they are looked upon as visions of the saints or “psychic phenomena”, are also forms of ecstasy<sup>1</sup>

Ecstasy, the highest state of bliss, the condition of fully satisfied desire, in which life is suspended, is a death, it is soon over, because life compels our individuality to re-awaken against our wills. We have to give up ecstasy, to renounce death; for a permanent ecstasy, a continued state of death, is incompatible with life. The self cannot be eliminated for long without involving physical death: the pulse becomes weaker again, the vibration dies down, the spiritual and emotional matter retires behind its barriers, and life begins anew. Life cannot fulfil our highest desires, for we only live as long as we desire, the fulfilment of our desires would be death. What we desire is the love-death. Supreme love longs for and

<sup>1</sup> In this connection it is as senseless to deny the sexual foundation of all these conditions and creations as it is superficial to put them on the same level for that reason. Everything can be traced back to an original foundation, and the primitive libido is sexual (not the most primitive which is asexual; sexuality is in itself a sublimation). The tree grows out of the earth, out of decaying, dying matter—stem, branches, leaves, and blossom or fruit. There would be no rose if there were no manure, but the manure is not the same as the rose and has not the same value—the rose is not “nothing but” the manure.

fulfils itself in death, and even the representation of it in art—Isolde's *Liebestod*, for instance—puts us into a condition approaching unconsciousness of self. Love and death are inextricably interwoven.

The death for which we long is not an unconscious but a super-conscious state, not not-being but more-than-being, not annihilation of individuality but intensification of it beyond its own limits. This is the state of *nirvāna*, which only looks like not-being, or sheer emptiness, if one regards consciousness of self-hood as the whole of consciousness instead of as a fraction of it. *Nirvāna* on this side of the grave is ecstasy, *nirvāna* on the other side is an eternal ecstasy undisturbed by any reawakening; it resembles, as Tagore says, not a lamp that goes out in the darkness but a lamp which blends with the rising sun and disappears in it.

That is the meaning of the doctrine which is only in appearance inimical to life. Schopenhauer's "will to live", the "libido" of the psycho-analysts, the "desire" of Indian metaphysics all describe the cause of life; but their fulfilment, their cessation, is death. Life is a movement called into existence by dissatisfaction, by unfulfilled desire, but the desire is the desire for death. The self desires to transcend its own narrow limits and unite with the not-self. This union is the goal of the self's desire, and its name is death.

Death is the goal of life.

## II

The desire for death is our highest longing, our highest ethical demand; yet it is at the same time our deepest fear and our greatest sin.

What makes Indian philosophy so incomparably profounder than other systems is its tripartite division of spiritual life. It is acquainted with abysses which have remained hidden from a more superficial mode of thought and are only just beginning to be revealed by our newest psychology. Good and evil belong to the middle division, they are the light and shade in the sphere of "passion"; below lies "sloth", above "equilibrium", and these resemble one another. Below the intellect is instinct, above it intuition, both belonging to the order of "feeling". Below self-consciousness is the unconscious, above it the super-conscious, both apparently without consciousness. Below the movement we call life is the fixity we call death; above it the achieved harmony, which we also call death.

The beginning and the end are like unto each other and woe unto him who confuses them! The human race is subject to the law of progressive evolution, all retrogression is "sin" and its penalty is "death". There is the universal unity which precedes evolution and the universal unity which succeeds it, and there is the everlasting sloth—incidentally, sloth is also one of the Catholic "deadly sins"—which seeks to return to primitive unity.

Psycho-analysis has developed the notion of "infantilism": the "infantile" person is the person who shirks the duty of developing, who wants to remain a child, out of sloth. On the other hand, the greatest spirits, like Lao-tse or Christ, teach that Man has to become a child again in order to find eternal bliss. His life's task is to overcome the self, to fly from the self is a dereliction of duty. All thinking and all writing about "consciousness", "sin" or "life" are useless unless a man starts by realising that the path which leads to the heights and that which leads to the abyss are alike and yet at the same time diametrically opposite.



It is only our reason which, like Hercules at the parting of the ways, is unable to distinguish between the true and the false. Our feelings show us the right way, we have the evolutionary commandment, the categorical imperative of conscience within us, and our conscience forbids us to choose the false.

Our life is love. Our individuality, our self, is a stage on the way, from which our amative impulses long to escape, either by advancing beyond individuality, or by falling back beneath it. Our conscience teaches us to distinguish between the forbidden and the blessed love.

The forbidden love is "incest". Incest is the desire to reunite with one's mother's body, to return to it, not to be born, it is the desire to reverse the direction of evolution, to avoid the pains of life, the sacrifices which evolution demands, to return to the vegetable state and sink back into the earth, into nothingness. It is the deadly sin, sloth, the sinful desire for death.

Incest is the most fundamental form of sloth, but everything that psycho-analysis includes under the heading of "infantilism" aims at this kind of death.

The blessed love is something outside and beyond sex, the sublimation of sexual into disinterested love (i.e., love that primarily seeks the happiness of the not-self) of one kind or another, the love which aims at transcending self and uniting with the not-self, which does not repudiate the self but overcomes it. The forbidden love shrinks from sacrifice, the blessed love longs for it. Whether it takes the form of conjugal love or love of children, friendship or philanthropy, art or any other service to the idea, it invariably demands, in greater or less degree, the sacrifice of the self, and when the sacrifice is made, the person approaches happiness, the state of rest where conscience has given its approval and duty has been done, the true life and the true death.

Death comes when our task is done, we do not know when that is, we do not grasp the form of a tune till it is finished or the meaning of a poem till we reach its end. In the tapestry which is our life the many-coloured threads cross and intertwine with each other, but only when it is finished do we recognise the pattern. Before, during and after life its meaning is complete in idea, as the idea of the tune is in the mind of its singer; but as we only understand the form of the tune at the end, so death alone can show us the meaning of life. Death is the completion of life.

Is it the final consummation? It may be, but I do not think it is, the idea strikes me as mean and unimaginative. Death is a new state or consciousness and a higher one, but why should it be both the highest and the last? The enlarged consciousness, of which we have an inkling in the super-conscious, is only a step further towards the incomprehensible universal consciousness. Our imagination is too poor. for it death is all or nothing. Should it not rather be a stage?

I cannot imagine any human being whose elevation to God (for that is what the universal consciousness means) at the moment of his death would not strike me as completely incredible, hence the doctrine of *Karma*, the transmigration of souls, (seems to me) nearer the truth. The human soul wanders through various forms and spheres in a constant process of evolution, purifying and raising itself, till the infinitely distant moment when the last consequences of our deeds and thoughts have worked themselves out. It dies a thousand deaths, which are the prelude to a thousand new lives, until it has finally overcome the desire to live, i.e., overcome individuality and its implications, until *Karma* is extinguished.

Even the doctrine of the transmigration of souls is only

a symbol, and many others are conceivable. Why should the soul return to this earth and in forms known to us? Why not a migration from star to star (such as Camille Flammarion dreams of), an evolution into completely unimaginable forms of life? And why not, since every flight of our imagination remains tied to experience, something completely unimaginable? The more unimaginable, the more likely. *(If a man has never been told*

It is senseless to try and draw hard and fast lines where no such lines are. The conviction that death is a continuation of life in a higher form is sufficient. The entelechy cannot perish, it goes on developing, whither we cannot tell. The dividing-line which we call death is an illusion of our own making, life and death are a pair of antithetical notions which we create for ourselves in our effort to comprehend the incomprehensible. Evolution goes on uninterruptedly, from what we call darkness into light and back again—a wavy line the beginning and end of which remain beyond our ken. We die to one life when we enter upon another, birth is a death and death a birth. They are nothing absolute, they are relative to one another, and death is another sort of life.

It may be that this life is a dream—a state of diminished consciousness, as dreams are—and that death is the awakening to full consciousness. But who can say when he is dreaming and when he is awake?

Dreaming and waking, life and death are merely appearances in a world of appearance. The Spirit is always awake, always alive, always absolute, it is the rest which includes all motion within itself. Appearances change, but the Idea remains the same for ever. The sensible world, *māya*, is the Spirit's dream, the dream a fraction of which we call our self. Sooner or later the dream which has lasted for thousands of years comes to an end, the hour of awakening approaches. The veils are

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lifted and when they are cleared away, when the dream is over, behold it was without duration.

The tune was a simultaneous harmony.

The dream of the earth and the human race is called evolution; we are in the midst of it, are parts of this dream, like birth and death, space and time. We shall awake and see that we have been dreaming that we dreamed.

As long as one is dreaming, it is impossible to grasp the meaning of a dream, it only becomes clear when one awakes. The cosmic dream of *Brāhma*, of which we are parts, has its meaning. In a confused way, we feel and divine this in our sleep; but when we wake we shall know the meaning of the dream.

## 6.—GOD AND MAN

WHEN, at the turn of the century, a well-known writer sent a manuscript to the *Revue des deux mondes* in which he raised the question of the existence of God, he received the monumental answer *La question de Dieu n'est pas d'actualité.*

The scientific era had answered the question to its own satisfaction, in the negative, and any inquiry which implied a doubt whether the problem had been finally solved struck it as out of date

Times change, and the Materialist conception of a meaningless, purposeless world has only been able to satisfy mankind—that is, the minute fraction of mankind that calls itself “educated” (educated in what sense?)—for a short time. The question has once more become an intensely live one—or rather, it has always been that and will remain so as long as the human race exists.

Properly speaking one should not talk about a “question” at all, for mankind has never doubted the existence of God, but merely constantly rejected one conception of God in order to replace it by another. The human race cannot exist without a goal; like the individual human being, it is compelled to come to terms with the world, to look for a meaning in life. The impulse to develop in a definite direction is ingrained in it, this direction must have a goal, and this ultimate goal Man calls God. God is the final goal, the Idea, which alone gives a content to human life.

But God is also the cause. Our thinking is causal, and it

is our reason that refuses to equate cause and effect. The world is not its own explanation, it must have a cause outside itself. In vain does reason seek to establish what this cause is. Creation has a creator, there is a will at work behind and through Nature. Man feels this will in himself, and all the rational arguments in the world which represent it as blind and self-created are unable to convince him. But now that science herself has explained the cosmic process as an evolution and Man, his reason included, as a product of this evolution, it becomes clear that his reason cannot be competent to set itself up over what created it, know it and determine its nature. If it really runs counter to the reason of a few people, to believe in a cause for Nature situated outside Nature, it is impossible to convince them, but there is no more compelling force in their arguments than in those of any sort of orthodoxy. The greatest minds have seldom adhered to any orthodox belief, they have often founded new faiths, and oftener still contented themselves with the realisation that the nature of God is impossible to explore, but they have never denied his existence. He who feels the creative spirit in himself ("it is not in me, but I am subject to it", says Goethe) cannot possibly deny its existence—which means that he believes in God.

Modern science is still influenced by the persecutions to which knowledge of all kinds was for many centuries exposed from orthodoxy, it has been too long on the defensive not to take the offensive on the first opportunity. Pressure produces counter-pressure, and it is hard for one who has shaken off a tyranny to resist the temptation to act the tyrant in his turn.

During many centuries biblical theology and the biblical story of creation, interpreted in a narrowly verbal fashion, were the great obstacle to all enquiry. When Darwin propounded his theory of evolution, the orthodox beliefs

became impossible for the thinking man, a contradiction arose, to say the very least of it, between reason and religion. People thought that they had pulverised the whole belief in God by this piece of scientific knowledge (though it should be remembered that Darwin himself saw no contradiction between his theory and Christianity), when all they had really done was to give a more rational and truer interpretation of the myth of creation than orthodoxy, with its insistence on the letter, had been able to do. The biblical story of creation is a compressed symbolical account of evolution which does not contradict the findings of scientific investigation. But even if the Bible were finally refuted, the human race would still possess in the Indian scriptures a whole series of evolutionary theories and theological speculations which are infinitely superior in truth and profundity to crass materialism.

From the earliest times to our own day, from the Vedas to Bergson, the attempt to establish the existence of a spiritual cause of life recurs again and again. Every nation and every age, and every great personality, has its conception of God, and they all resemble one another.

It has been said, and rightly, that belief in God was originally based on fear and ignorance. The external world and its phenomena are absolutely unintelligible to primitive man, hence he sees everywhere the work of mysterious, and therefore evil, spirits, whom he seeks to propitiate with offerings. Man's notion of God is always in accordance with his understanding of Nature, and with his own mode of being. Primitive man, whose mode of being is instinct and fear, creates a threatening and unreasonable deity, a primitive superman, for himself. The evolution of the idea of God runs parallel with the evolution of the human race. With the development of intellect, much that seemed mysterious and "supernatural" becomes intelligible and therewith ceases to

inspire fear. Understanding leads to love, for we only understand that in which we find ourselves reflected back to us, and so the menacing and arbitrary God becomes a God of love.

Exactly the same evolution takes place in the child's attitude to its parents from being incomprehensible despots, always ready to punish, they become a loving providence. Freud has drawn attention to the similarity between the father-idea and the idea of God (God the Father) and on those grounds explained the belief in God as a symbolisation of the father-idea. The parallel is unquestionably a right one, on the other hand it in no way explains the belief in God but only the conception of God, and only the Judæo-Christian one at that. Man's conception of God is as large as Man himself, as his powers of conception, for what he calls God, the totality of everything he regards as "good" (terror is the primitive's good just as "goodness" is the developed human being's), is the ideal to which he himself aspires

Man has always been convinced that he is created in God's image, rationalism has reversed this and declared that God is created in Man's image, in which it is quite right, but the two positions are not mutually exclusive. When people take Nature as primary, Man as a creation of Nature and God as an idea of Man's, their contention is quite incapable of being proved, and does not really even differ from that of the religions, for it is, after all, quite indifferent whether one calls the cause God or Nature, and the belief in the divine nature of Man is in that case simply a belief in his "natural" nature. It is only if one postulates a meaningless and causeless world that the notion that Man and the world have a meaning, a coherence, becomes absurd.



It is, however, equally justifiable—and even “scientific”—to maintain that Nature is a creation of the human mind, and that this human mind must have its cause. In all these questions, whether matter or mind is the cause or the effect, one invariably goes round in a circle, they are both, because they are only relative to each other and fundamentally one

All our difficulties come from the artificial distinctions which our reason creates, such as those between the individual and the human race, Nature and God.

The original distinction, without which we cannot think at all, is the no less artificial one between the self and the not-self. The self is the individuality, the not-self everything else. This we next divide into the human race, the animal kingdom and “Nature” (i.e., the vegetable and mineral worlds), which is again sub-divided into separate phenomena; and over and above all these phenomena there is a part of the not-self which we call God. Whereupon we proceed to involve ourselves in a thousand contradictions which we have ourselves created.

We can only think by comparing, nothing is big or small, unless we can compare it with something else. On the basis of these comparisons we acquire experience and with it the ability to act rightly, i.e., in accordance with our interests. That is what our reason with its distinctions, from individuality onwards, is for. Reason stands midway between ignorance and knowledge, it may also become an obstacle to knowledge, because it only sees what is nearest to it, the trees but not the wood

We can only *know* by a process the opposite of the one just described. *Knowing* means finding a unity in the manifold of appearance. After our reason has split up the not-self into a collection of separate phenomena, we look once more for the law behind the confusion. This law is that of unity. Progress consists of gradually

learning to subsume all separate phenomena under a higher and higher unity.

In this way we laboriously succeed in making that intelligible to our reason which animals know by instinct and of which our feelings, did we but listen to them, are aware.

We recognise "species", e.g., that every apple is not a unique specimen, but that they are all apples, further, that apples and pears are both kinds of fruit, and that fruits and vegetables belong to the vegetable kingdom, but we do not go on far enough, our reason calls a halt and tells us that the vegetable kingdom is distinct from the mineral and the animal kingdoms. But they are not distinct, they are parts of the higher unity of Nature, and the realisation of this fact is a further step forward in knowledge. Here, however, reason (in Europe) once more stops still for some thousands of years. Man, it insists, is distinct from Nature. He is not, any more than he is from his fellow human beings, Man is a part of Nature. Now, however, science cries a final and energetic "Halt!". Nature, it declares, in which mankind is included, is the final synthesis, is its own cause. Nature is nothing of the kind, it is a minute fraction of an infinite and unknown universe, and this universe is not its own cause. The universe, and with it the human race, is a portion of the effect, the phenomenon, whose cause we call God.

The world is a unity which is reflected in the human spirit, and presents itself to us in the form of evolution. "Nature" is the pre-human part of evolution, "humanity" the part contemporary with the individual, our "ego", or awakened consciousness, is the present moment, the past is our memory which goes right back to the beginnings of evolution—in other words, the unconscious. This past and this present together compose

"humanity". The extent of our individuality is measured by the amount of this humanity it can bring into consciousness—that is to say, it is the transition, and the obstacle, to universal consciousness, the obstinate individual rhythm which drowns the universal rhythm.

The present moment is merely an artificially created point of rest between the past and the future, between memory and presentiment. Humanity is an illusory bridge between Nature and God. The past, the present and the future, Nature and Man and "God"—these are God.

God, therefore, is the sum total of the spatial and temporal universe, but that is only the form under which he appears in our consciousness. God is immanent and transcendent, the appearance and the cause of the appearance; as its cause, however, he is unknowable and inexplicable to the appearance itself, and therewith to Man.

The further Man progresses, the higher and more abstract his conception of God becomes. From a physical it becomes a purely spiritual one. God becomes the universal spirit.

He is present in all life, but obscured by the form; he is Spirit, but beyond reason and beyond feeling too, he is the harmony that lies beyond what we call good and evil, the absolute beyond the relative.

God is as great as the conception of him that Man, be he Goethe or an African negro, can rise to, as great as Man's knowledge of his own nature, for that is a divine symbol. The more the veils which hide Man's own nature from him are lifted, the more he discovers the divine in himself, becomes God in fact.

It would be a mystery why Man recognises God in Nature so much more readily than within himself did we not know that it is his consciousness of self-identity that

hinders him. Being unable to take up a disinterested attitude to the self, he misunderstands it and mistakes his body, his instincts or his reason for his personality, and not finding God there, supposes him to be of an alien nature. When, however, he discovers that his personality extends as far as the limits of the universe, that it is identical with the universe, and that his ego is merely a wave in this ocean, he recognises his own divinity. His memory reaches back to the beginnings of life in time, out to the ends of the universe in space.

His ego is an inseparable part of the Whole, his memories and anticipations are those of the cosmic consciousness, the individual is a point in the course of the eternal flux, a registering-apparatus of cosmic feeling. The ordinary individual registers but few vibrations of thought or feeling, the great individual many and subtle ones. The apparatus by which cosmic feeling becomes conscious of itself grows steadily more subtle and more complicated.

The great sages, the poets, musicians and painters, the saints and the prophets are "apparatuses" of this sort. They are not great individualities, but great examples of selflessness, unhampered by egoistic interest, in them the divine shines through the purely human. They do not have great thoughts or emotions, the great thought and the great emotion are made manifest through them, they oppose no obstacle to the divine truth, and the distant light that illuminates mankind's path shines through them.

"Become what thou art". Man is always God, but does not know it. God is the essence of all life, *Brāhma*, the Upanishads teach us, is the sap of the plant, the scent of the flower, he is in all things that which constitutes their essence, their meaning, their content. As the ether penetrates and encloses everything, is at once inside things

and outside them, so is the divine spirit both inside and outside Man. We can only grasp things by drawing distinctions, and so we enclose the divine within personality and call this enclosed thing the human soul. In it we see the image and the symbol of God, but these dividing-lines prevent us from grasping more than the image. What the divine element outside these limits is can neither be uttered nor described. When questioned about its nature the Indian sage remained dumb, and when the questioner pressed him said, "I have told you everything that can be told."

The relative cannot grasp the absolute, but when we understand relativity, we know why and for what purpose these dividing-lines exist, and we know that they are only dividing-lines and not the end.

In the midst of our dream we sometimes awake for a short time and half consciously realise that we are dreaming. Evolution, life, is a dream of *Brāhma*, a dream that is dreamed through us. Dreams are wish-fulfilments, says modern science, and the Upanishads relate that *Brāhma* felt lonely and therefore divided himself into *Brāhma* and *Brāhma's* dream, *māya*, in order that he might love the latter and reabsorb it into himself. This is an attempt to interpret the meaning of the dream, the ground of the desire, and consequently a useless attempt.

We cannot while we are dreaming understand the meaning of the dream. "Let mankind recognise the limits of enquiry and respect them", says Goethe. As long as we are part of life, we shall only be able to have an inkling of the divine in its purity, not to understand it, and all attempts to make the truth comprehensible distort and detract from it. God is exactly as great as our conception of him, and it is childish to suppose that our conception could possibly reach anywhere near the truth. When we

## THE MESSAGE OF ASIA

shall have become what seems divine to us today, the Absolute will still be beyond our reach. What we see and know of the world is only a minute fraction; the highest flights of our imagination do not take us so very far beyond experience. What we take for the summit when we are half-way up the mountain is merely a shoulder, yet the mountain is a whole. The drop is the ocean, though one cannot comprehend the ocean in its vastness by adding up the drops.

Man is God, as the seed is the fruit, he is and he appears to become. Only one thing matters, that he should grasp the unity of all becoming, his divine unity.

All antitheses are but apparent, from the most superficial to the most profound.

One the religions and the nations, East and West and North and South, art and science and Nature.

One the body and the mind, the male and the female, good and evil, life and death, Man and God.

One the self and the not-self

Life is becoming and death is becoming, humanity is a process of becoming God, but God is becoming, and also being, which is reflected in becoming.

God is awareness, equilibrium, harmony, the rest which includes all motion within itself.

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